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Barber Shop Quartet singing can appeal to seniors

By LES MELLISH

Herald Special
Can you say SPEBSQSA?
It doesn't matter if you can't. However, it does mean something to the initiated.

It stands for the "Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America," which is the corporation governing all Barbershop chapters in the U.S.A. and Canada, head office, Kenosha, Wisconsin.

"Barbershop" is a form of singing dating back into history but recognized in the 1930's as four-part harmony when the society was formed.

It is very pleasant music and not difficult for average voices to sing. So if you like to sing, maybe just to yourself in the shower, and can old a tune, Barbershopping may be for you.

A chapter is formed by a male chorus (female choruses exist singing a similar type of music but having a separate organization) and many communities on Ontario have chapters.

Possibly the best known chorus here is the Scarborough "Dukes of Harmony" with over 100 voices.

This chorus won the annual international competition twice in succession and came second the following year. It is an experience to hear them. From time to time they appear in the Roy Thompson Hall. There are other choruses in Kitchener, Guelph, London, Oakville, Mississauga and Etobicoke just to mention a few around here.

All choruses are always open to new members so allow me to try

to persuade you that you may enjoy being a member of a barbershop chorus and that you may be missing an opportunity to enrich your life if you don't give it a try.

All ages with mature voices may belong but membership of a chorus may have particular appeal to seniors who generally have more time to spare.

To sing barbershop is to be happy, the two go together, so a chorus means good fellowship, and this spirit is deliberately fostered in a chorus to create a climate for the best singing. So two-and-a-half hours of barbershop singing once a week provides a relaxing diversion at the end of a working day and it doesn't matter whether you're a fireman, postman, manager or corporate executive you have a common bond in song and fellowship.

I mentioned previously that "barbershop" is four part harmony. The pitch is maintained by the lead voices singing the melody and the other three voices, tenor, bass and baritone provide the harmony. Members of the chorus sing whichever part suits their voice.

We all sing from sheet music, specially arranged for the barbershop style, until we have learned the music and lyrics then we set aside the music and sing from the heart putting in appropriate interpretation and choreography.

Not only do we just sing, we are also coached in voice exercises to improve vocal quality. Breathing too has an important bearing on singing and special exercises help to improve this. We try to do

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the best we are capable of with what we have; then we show off by singing to others. We sing in seniors centres, shopping centres, churches, concerts and for private entertainment. Annually we compete with other choruses in Ontario at our District Convention and many choruses put on their own shows every year.

This is a lot of fun and it may provide the opportunity to branch out into a bit of acting.

There is also the opportunity to achieve a greater measure of satisfaction by participation in quartet singing.

This requires dedication of more time but it is the quintessence of barbershop singing and is sometimes the road to stardom. Incidentally, barbershoppers never sing solo as barbershoppers because the musical expression requires four-part harmony.

What is expected of a barbershopper? Financially your membership of a chapter entails a membership fee which is about \$100 annually. You may be required to contribute towards the chapter uniform. All chapters have their own distinctive dress uniform for formal appearances on stage. Some chapters may also have a distinctive shirt for casual wear and this may require outright purchase or partial payment. Some expense is also associated with the annual convention.

Your contribution of time includes one evening per week

throughout the year, some learning time on your own at home for new music and an occasional "sing-out", usually locally, and in the evening.

Then there are a few extra practices for the annual show and for competitions. These mostly occur on Saturday mornings. Quartet singing would also require some extra time.

The funds of the chapter come from "paid sing-outs", the proceeds of the annual show and a share of the membership fees. The money is used for chapter expenses, part payment for new

uniforms and to make donations to the charity we serve, "Harmonize for Speech," which provides aid for treatment and therapy of children with impaired hearing.

It is a fine hobby. Here in Georgetown we have men singing in one of four choruses.

If this is of interest to you, you may enquire further about barbershopping by contacting any one of the names below.

Burlington - Gord Hunt, Lead, 877-5768.

Guelph - Walter Doupague, Bass, 877-9664.

Mississauga - Les Mellish, Lead, 877-7749 or Bernie Quigley, Baritone, 457-2842.

Oakville - Jim Turner, J., Bass, 877-9863.

Alzheimer centre locates in Burlington

People with Alzheimer disease and those who care for them will receive enhanced and improved services through a new centre in Burlington. The Alzheimer Society of Halton-Wentworth will be given a \$50,000 provincial grant to help establish the education/resource centre.

In making the announcement, Community and Social Services Minister Zanana Akande said that the organization will use the one-time funding to assist with this Halton demonstration project setting up the new centre. It will be located in offices next to the Red Cross Homemakers Services, in Applevue Square, Appleyby Line and Fairview Street.

The Alzheimer Society for Halton-Wentworth works with the Red Cross Society and the Victorian Order of Nurses to train and support family members and other caregivers.

"I know this funding will be effective, helping to improve and reinforce services for people with Alzheimer's," said Mrs. Akande. "We need to promote greater awareness of this debilitating disease and of the problems faced by the people with it and those who care for them."

The choice of Applevue Square is a direct result of an initiative by the Rotary Club of Lakeshore-Burlington.

Prices effective thru Saturday September 28, 1991

We reserve the right to limit quantities to normal family requirements. Coupon items limited to two.



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CASE OF 24 - 355 mL TINS (Unit cost 7.0¢ per 100 mL)

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BUY 1 - GET 1 FREE

LIMIT: 1 FREE box per coupon. LIMIT: 2 coupons per customer. Offer valid Sept. 23 - Sept. 28, 1991. (Feature price without coupon .99) G/P S.C. #604

WITH THIS COUPON SAVE \$2.00

REGULAR OR DIET (Unit cost 7.0¢ per 100 mL)

Coca-Cola or Canada Dry

case of 24 - 355 mL tins

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WITH THIS COUPON SAVE 50¢

QUICK OR INSTANT

Quaker Oats

900 g - 1 kg bag

.99

LIMIT: 1 bag per coupon. LIMIT: 2 coupons per customer. Offer valid Sept. 23 - Sept. 28, 1991. (Feature price without coupon 1.49) V.C. #

WITH THIS COUPON SAVE 30¢

ASSORTED VARIETIES 130 g - 140 g PACKAGE

Exquisite Sauce Mixes

.99

LIMIT: 1 package per coupon. LIMIT: 2 coupons per customer. Offer valid Sept. 23 - Sept. 28, 1991. (Feature price without coupon 1.29) V.C. #

WITH THIS COUPON SAVE 50¢

GENERAL MILLS 425 g BOX

Oatmeal Raisin Crisp Cereal

2.79

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4.99

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2 LITRE BOTTLE (Unit cost 5¢ per 100 mL)

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