



# Serenader



Volume 55, Issue 2

April 2007

Founded September 14, 1952

## Our Big Spring Show is Coming on May 12

### "Barbershop Goes To Broadway"



By Bob Cochnar, Performance VP

Folks who waited until the last minute in 2006 to secure their tickets for our "**Disney at the Disney**" show were a tad disappointed. The best seats had been taken. And, as it turned out, the two performances were pretty near a sellout. This year's show, "**Barbershop Goes to Broadway**" will surely break box office records! The New MexiChords and friends offer up a terrific collection of songs from great Broadway musicals, songs like *It's a Grand Night for Singing*, *Liza*, *I Got Rhythm*, *They All Laughed*, *Everybody Ought to Have a Maid*, *There Is Nothing Like a Dame*, *Everything's Coming Up Roses*, *Lida Rose* and many more. Those friends include a guest quartet, **Hi-Fidelity**, champions from California, and that local favorite, the ensemble known appropriately as **Broadway**. There are two performances on Saturday, May 12, at 2 and 7:30 p.m., in the magnificent Roy E. Disney Center for Performing Arts at the National Hispanic Cultural Center. Don't miss this show!

See Show Poster on Page 6

Be Kind to our Guests

Wear your nametag to rehearsal!

### PART OF THE PUZZLE

By Bill Biffle



(Ed — Bill Biffle is a previous chorus director of the New MexiChords, member of two district champion quartets, arranger, coach, teacher, contest judge (retired), society board member (in charge of the headquarters relocation to Nashville), and is currently the Barbershop Harmony Society Executive Vice President, in line to assume the BHS presidency in 2009).

*Gents, first let me say how much fun I'm having singing with you again. Doug is doing a great job teaching the songs and moving the rehearsals along with efficiency and good humor — not always easy in this business, I can tell you! The tags he's teaching are a great way to add variety to the evening and give us all something new to sing, too. Plus the way we're learning them — by the numbers — is stretching our minds a bit, too. Always a plus as the years get more golden. Let me urge you to get three other fellows at the break and sing through the tag again. Commit them to memory and you'll*  
**Continued on Page 2**

## The New MexiChords

### 2007 Board of Directors

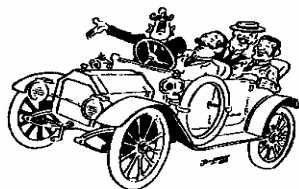
President;	Gil Whalen
VP Performance;	Bob Cochnar
VP Music;	Tom Hoover
VP Membership;	J.C Preston
VP Marketing;	Open
Secretary;	Jay Cousins
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### Members at Large

Larry Archambeau  
Tom Cole  
Chuck Levy

### Music Committee

Music Director;	Doug Arrington
Program Director;	Oz Wehlander
Tenor Section Leader;	Open
Lead Sec Leader;	Joe McGinn
Bari Sec Leader;	Tom Hoover
Bass Sec Leader;	Phil Middleton



**Bring A Guest To  
Barbershop**

## Riser Etiquette

**Listen, Don't Hum**

**When the pitch  
pipe blows.**

## **Bill Biffle (Continued)**

*have something beside Wild Irish Rose to sing with other guys!*

*And, speaking of WIR, thanks to Ozzie for doing the heavy lifting on the Polecat Program. Some of us know most of these songs, but most of us don't know them all. This, too, is a great way to expand your repertoire of songs to sing with others and keep (get?) in touch with the heritage of our style, too!*

*Last, Dick L. kindly asked me to submit something for the **Serenader** so, looking through my files, I found the article below. Even though I first wrote it in 1999 (when I had dogs) I think it's still valid.*

*Keep singin'. Keep smilin'. Keep havin' FUN with our hobby! BB*

Walking with my dogs this morning, (I've given up trying to decide if I walk them or they walk me), a thought occurred about our ensemble sound and my part in it.

My wife loves jigsaw puzzles; the more pieces the better. I hate them. She loves them because she's good at them. I hate them because I'm terrible at them. She's good at looking at the missing shape, checking out the surrounding color, searching through the bone yard very deliberately, then deciding on just the right piece to try and trying it very gently. Usually, it fits first time.

I have a different method. I just grab the nearest loose piece and jam it into the hole. If it doesn't fit right away, I simply hit it harder. The "get a bigger hammer" school of jigsaw puzzling. Not very productive, I admit.

What's the point? Well, it occurred to me and my dogs that many of us sing in the chorus rather like I approach puzzle assembling. We just jam our note into the sound without much regard for whether it's of the appropriate size, or pitch, or volume, or tone quality, or whatever. The "just sing away and hope for the best" school of vocal ensemble music.

Of course, YOU don't do it that way – at least not exactly. But, consider how you might change your singing if you approached every note, every line, every phrase, and every song with an increased awareness of the sound around you. If you truly listened as you sang – really assessed your "fit" in the sound -- how might the weight, volume, vowel and tone quality, pitch and etc., of your contribution to the whole that is the New MexiChords' sound change?

If my note is too soft, out of tune, lacking in appropriate energy, or simply out of character with the sound around me, I'm not completing the picture - not "filling my hole in the sound", as it were. If overpower the sound around me,

## **Visit our Web Site!**

at [www.newmexichords.com](http://www.newmexichords.com)

## **Phone Us!**

at 505-242-4451

## **Email Us!**

at [singers@newmexichords.com](mailto:singers@newmexichords.com)

## **Write Us!**

**The New MexiChords**

**P.O. Box 22076**

**ALBQ, NM 87154**

## **Come sing with us!**

The New MexiChords Barbershop Chorus meets every Tuesday from 7 - 10 pm at St John's United Methodist Church choir room at 2626 Arizona NE, one block north of Menaul, and one block east of San Pedro.

## **Join Us!**

### **Society Personal Information**

Guys, remember that you need to update the Members-Only section of the Society website when your personal info changes (mailing address, email, phone numbers). And let me know too, for the roster! Dick

### **Bill Biffle (Continued)**

I force my sound "out of the hole" (or whole, if you prefer). The ensemble suffers in any case. Like a piece in a puzzle, the "right size" in the "right place" is the only thing that works.

Taking this to the extreme, what happens when your note is completely missing? (Remember that meeting you missed last year?) Well, rather obviously, the ensemble and, indeed, the chapter suffer when any of us misses a rehearsal or performance. Your unique contribution to the sound, the camaraderie, the fellowship – the FUN – of the evening is simply not there.

In the future, I'm going to try to remember that the chorus is a large picture puzzle that has a "Bill-sized piece" in it. If my piece is still in the box – if I'm missing completely - the breach is irreparable. When I'm there, my piece must fit or the whole thing is out of whack. Sorta like that pretty girl with a missing tooth. Or a black one.

Just a thought while being led through life by my dogs.  
See you Tuesday, Champs!

Bill Biffle

## ***PLEASE SAVE THESE DATES CHRISTMAS SHOW, DEC 8—9***

Well, yes, we suppose it is a little early to be thinking about the holiday season but a little planning ahead can't hurt (just put this newsletter on your refrigerator door). The New MexiChords presents its Christmas concert on December 8 and 9 at Central United Methodist Church, Copper and University (across from the UNM campus), Albuquerque. Once again, we'll have two matinees on Saturday and Sunday, and one evening performance on Saturday.

And the show promises to be terrific!

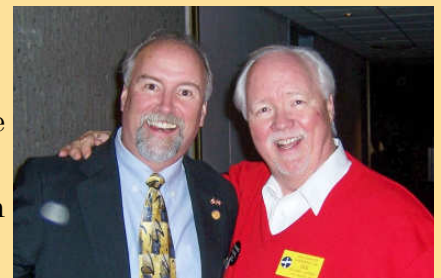
### ***2007 Mid-Winter in Albuquerque***

#### ***Did we have a great time, or what?***

It is old news, so we won't go into any detail here, but make sure you don't miss the 2008 Mid-Winter in San Antonio! It'll be a blast.

You might even want to become good 'buds' with the brass from Kenosha (or Nashville, wherever), like me. We're looking for two more!

Oh by the way, the guy on the left is Ed Watson!



## ***Facial Expressions***     *By Dave Domroes*

*Stolen from Par for the Chorus; Jon Wagner, Editor*

You should try this 3 times weekly until show time. First thing is to look at your face to see what your smile looks like and experiment on how to improve it by raising your cheeks and eyebrows. I found a bathroom half mirror works best. This room also gives you more of an echo sound and you should hear your notes better. (You might be surprised!) Now sing a song trying to hold as much smile (*above the mouth*) as possible. Keep watching through the entire song. Next watch your movement left to right (not too much though) & up & down in time with music. I think you might find you could get thrown off either by the notes or words. This is why you should practice this with each song. By seeing ourselves, we can get better and be as good as any group. Now that we are on the risers, let's show our audiences how good we can be!

## ***How Can I Take Part in My Chapter?***

*By George Williamson. Editor, Orange Slices, Orlando*

- Thank the director for all of his effort.
- Thank your chapter officers for all of their work.
- Don't talk on the risers.
- ~Smile~ Enjoy your hobby and show it (let the director know you're "really" there).
- Volunteer to do a little more than you really want to in fundraising or committee work.
- Talk to two or three people (before, during break or after rehearsal) that you normally don't talk to.
- When you are at social gatherings, quartet performances, etc, always talk about your chapter You never know where your next guest might be.
- Surprise an ill member with a card or a phone call. Call an absent member and let him know you missed him.
- Learn your part (words, notes, choreography, and stage presentation) early so you can help the slow learners and new people.
- Learn to use a pitch-pipe, and then memorize the keys to songs in the chorus repertoire.
- Don't come to rehearsal with a contagious sore throat or cough.

## ***New MexiChord's Quartets***

***Call 242-4451 to  
book!***



### **First Light**

Steve Cooper  
Kirk Sugars  
Tim Steider  
Phil Middleton

### **Harmonikats**

Nick Maxwell  
Scott Free  
Bill Lemen  
Ron Randall

### **Whatchamacallitz**

Oz Wehlander  
Joe McGinn  
Les Elmer  
Mike Taylor

## PREZ SEZ

By Gil Whalen

Chapter President



The chorus is busy getting ready for our Annual Show “**BARBERSHOP GOES TO BROADWAY**”, with special guests *Hi Fidelity* quartet and our local favorites – *Broadway*. See elsewhere in this issue for all the details.

Fred McCracken has done an outstanding job as Chairman of program ad sales, with Bill Biffle as the super ad salesman. We have exceeded our budget estimate again this year, thanks to many members efforts. We are also working hard to sell out the theater. With four weeks to go, we are well past 50% of the house tickets sold. Fans that need tickets should call 465-6435.

After the show, the Music Committee will choose two of the songs for us to start fine-tuning for the Rocky Mountain District Chorus and Quartet Contest scheduled for September 28-29. This year the contest will be held at the Albuquerque Convention Center Kiva Theater. Individual tickets will be available for guests in September – call 465-6435.

Our next Guest Night is May 22. Get your list together of prospects to invite and tell them you will pick them up for this special fun-filled evening being planned by our Membership VP, J.C. Preston.

***Keep the Whole World Singing!***

## Serenader Distribution

Do you enjoy seeing the full color version of the Serenader by email, and don't need this newsletter delivered by snail mail? Hey, just let me know and the chapter can save copy and postal costs!

Don't get it by email? Send me an email asking to be put on email distribution — and add your friends — it is FREE! Just e-mail me at [dicklam@swcp.com](mailto:dicklam@swcp.com)

## *Vowel Matching*

By Tom Raburn, Big D Bulletin

When barbershop harmony is sung correctly, we are creating harmonic overtones and “expanded sound.” One of the most important factors in the achievement of choral blend and expanded sound is unity of vowel sounds. Vowels are what we sing and sustain, separated by consonants to make words. When we match vowel sounds, we create like harmonics and the sound expands in intensity through reinforcement. In singing, vowels are created through the natural resonance of the human vocal tract. The tongue, lips and jaw are used to fashion the resonators into their vowel shapes. Some basic rules to follow when forming vowel sounds are:

1. When producing all vowel sounds, the tip of the tongue should be placed gently on the lower gum ridge, with the tip barely touching the base of the lower teeth. This helps keep the throat open so the vocal chords can vibrate naturally through the resonators (mouth, throat, and sinus cavities).
2. The jaw should be allowed to relax naturally with a swinging down and back motion.
3. The lips should leave the teeth uncovered.
4. Although the mouth must be open wide, it is not how wide it is open but the shape that is most important. Every vowel can be sung with one of three mouth shapes: round (example—“oh”), square (example—“ih” as in sit) and oblong (example—“ah” as in pop). Refinements to form each specific vowel sound are made by the degree to which the tongue is arched in the mouth, and the degree to which the jaw is dropped. For instance, both the “oh” sound and the “oo” (as in moon) sound are made with the round mouth shape, but the “oh” sound is made with the mouth as open as possible while the “oo” sound is made with the smallest, most rounded shape. As we sing the songs in our repertoire, keep in mind the basic mechanics of producing vowel sounds and think about the target vowel sound for each word in the song. Properly matched vowels can enable our chorus of 40-something men to “fill the hall” and create the expanded sound that makes barbershop harmony so much fun to sing and hear.



**BARBERSHOP GOES TO BROADWAY**  
**STARRING THE NEW MEXICHORDS**  
**FEATURING THE "HI-FIDELITY QUARTET"**  
**AND ALBUQUERQUE'S OWN "BROADWAY"**

**Songs from Your  
 Favorite Musicals!**

Saturday, May 12, 2 & 7:30 p.m.  
 Disney Center for Performing Arts  
 ALBUQUERQUE

Reserved Seats at

\$12, \$17, \$22

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Roy E. Disney Center  
 for Performing Arts  
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## Caring and Sharing

Our thoughts and prayers go out to those who are ill or recovering from injury or illness, especially Dick White, Larry Archambeau, Loren Kula and Dale Harris.

We hope you all recover quickly!

### *The New MexiChords*

**The Serenader is published quarterly and is distributed to members and fans free of charge.**

**Editorial comments, articles, donations and address corrections may be sent to the editor;**

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**Articles without bi-lines are written by the editor and do not necessarily represent the views of the chapter, district or the Society.**

### *Riser Etiquette*

*Listen, Don't Talk*

*When a Director is out front*

### *Bari Bashing Corner*

Why is a baritone like a SCUD missile?  
They are both offensive and inaccurate.

## *Spotlight on Members*

### *Our more experienced singers!*

Chuck Vertrees	54 years
Charlie Jackson	53 years
Jim Law	44 years
Phil Middleton	41 years
Doug Arrington	40 years
Stan Back	39 years
Oz Wehlander	35 years
Loren Kula	35 years
Bill Biffle	32 years
Nick Maxwell	32 years
Dick Harris	30 years

### *Bill Biffle Bio*

Bill was born and raised in Lubbock, Texas, where he studied music theory and piano from first grade through 9th grade. He also sang in choir and played trumpet in band/orchestra from 7<sup>th</sup> grade through college. He has performed in musical theaters in Lubbock, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque. (He has been in The Music Man three times). Bill went on to get a BA at Texas Tech in English Literature with a double minor in Music and Spanish.

Bill's career in construction spans the past 40 years and he has been President of B.R. Gordon Construction Co, Inc., in Albuquerque since 1987. Bill's hobbies include music, grandkids, and golf – in roughly that order. His musical taste runs from barbershop to jazz and swing. He's the leader and trumpet player in a New Orleans style Dixieland band called the **Duke City Jazz Band**. He has been married to Lillian, mostly since 1965 and has two daughters, Anne and Rebecca, who have given him and Lillian four exceptional grandchildren.

Bill sang in a barbershop quartet in high school and went to local BBS shows now and then, but didn't

***Continued on Page 8***

## *Spot Light on Members*

### ***Bill Biffle (continued)***

join the Society until 1976, when, on a whim he called the SPEBSQSA phone number in Albuquerque. The phone rang on the desk of a man named Jack Smith. Bill asked Jack where and when the chapter met. Jack replied, "Tuesdays at 7. Where do you live?" Bill told him and Jack picked him up and took him to his first meeting. There's a lesson in there somewhere for all of us!

### ***Don DeNoon Bio***

Born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana, Don received his Bachelor's Degree from University of Evansville, Indiana. After college, he took employment in Indianapolis as a



social worker but soon was drafted into the US Army. His enlistment of two years and ten days (but who's counting?) was completed as a Military Intelligence Coordinator at Fort Holabird, Maryland. Don then returned to his job as a social worker for a year, before entering Eden Theological Seminary at Webster Groves, Missouri. With a Master of Divinity Degree, Don was ordained in the United Methodist Church and served as pastor of churches in Evansville and St. Louis.

Don re-enrolled at Eden and earned his Doctor of Ministry in Counseling. For 20 years, Don was campus minister at campuses in Missouri and Nevada before taking early retirement from the ministry. He moved to Albuquerque and continued to work for a number of years, this time as a therapist at a counseling center. Full retirement came in 2001.

Don is divorced and has two adult children. Son David lives with wife Corinne and their newborn (adopted) daughter in Wisconsin where David is pastor of Plymouth Congregational (UCC) Church. Daughter Leigh was married in October 2006 and resides in Indiana with her husband Rob. Before marriage, Leigh was an award-winning broadcast journalist at a radio station in Indianapolis.

Don keeps busy with photography, writing poetry, cooking, daily walks with his dog (Bert), occasional day-hiking, and bike-rides along the bosque trail. His poetry has led Don to write several compositions, receiving help from friends who are accomplished musicians. Don's favorite piece is *Albuquerque New Mexico*.

Volunteer work keeps Don involved in activity that he enjoys at KUNM-FM and at Casa Esperanza.

His love of barbershop music started while Don was in high school. He was a member of the boy's octet. Last summer, he saw an announcement about the New MexiChords in the *Albuquerque Journal* and decided to check it out. From the first rehearsal Don says, "It was like coming home".

### ***Phil Middleton Bio***

Phil is a 40 year veteran of SPEBSQSA, our bass section leader and our most recent Barbershopper of the Year in 2006. Phil was born in Shamrock, Texas



and was raised in Waynoka, Oklahoma. While in high school, he played the trumpet in the band, sang in the choir, solo and small ensemble. He went to Oklahoma State University where he sang in a fraternity chorus, and graduated with a BS in Mechanical Engineering. Phil spent 23 years in the Air Force working on avionic maintenance, missile operations, technical intelligence, and nuclear weapons safety He achieved the rank of Lt. Col and was stationed at Lowry, Kepflavic, Malstrom, Nakhon, Phenom, Vandenberg, Ellsworth, Wright-Pat, and Kirkland Air Force Bases. He later worked as an Aerospace engineer for 9 years at Logicon, San Pedro, CA as a Nuclear Safety consultant. Phil has been married to wife, Pat, for 47 years, has two sons, Carl and Bruce, and 5 grandchildren.) Phil got into barbershop after being a MC at the Malstrom Officers Club,

## Spot Light on Members

### *Phil Middleton (Continued)*

and hearing a local quartet sing “*Bill Grogan’s Goat*”, which at the time was the funniest song he ever heard! He was so impressed that he attended the next chapter meeting and was hooked after hearing ‘*The Old Songs*’. He has been a member of six choruses and ten quartets -- most recently with *First Light* -- and he’s still at it 40 years later!

### Hal Hudson Bio



I was born in Salamanca, New York but raised in Bradford, Pennsylvania, the home of Zippo lighters, Kendall Oil and Case knives. I participated in school musicals and sang in district and state choruses. I attended the U.S. Air Force Academy in the 60’s where I sang in the cadet chorale, including the first service held in the new cadet chapel. I became a meteorologist before attending medical school in Pittsburgh, PA, and did my internship in Biloxi, MS just after Camille and way before Katrina. I was a flight surgeon in Oklahoma and then an ophthalmology resident back in San Antonio, TX. Practiced ophthalmology at Kirtland AFB and then on to Lovelace where I retired from full time practice in 2005. Worked part time for Eye Associates of New Mexico for a year and a half, then fully retired in 2006. I met my wife, Carolyn in Denver. She is from Superior, Wisconsin, and we have a cabin in that area, and plan to stay 3-4 months there in the summer now that we both are retired. We have three wonderful children, three grandkids and we spend time visiting them in St. Louis and on Cape Cod. My first introduction to barber shopping was when I won a scholarship from SPEBSQSA in high school. It was presented to the singer needing the most help! Would attend barbershop performances as I was stationed around the country and promised myself some day to sing in a chorus. Waited until I retired but think I should have joined earlier.

### Bill Johnson Bio

Bill was born in Duluth, Minnesota, and was raised in St. Paul where he attended Henry Sibley High School. His home-



room was originally in the auto shop, but he auditioned for the barbershop chorus homeroom instead. The director, Gar Lockrem, began a Young Men in Harmony program before school, drawing support and music from the North-Star BBS Chorus in St. Paul. Gar passed away in 2006, but his influence in the barbershop community still thrives. Bill attended the University of Minnesota, in both Duluth and St Paul. His family currently lives in the eclectic and eccentric town of Tujunga, in southern California. He is married to his lovely wife Liz, and have two children still at home, Christopher, who is 18 and Alyssa who is 17. Chris shares Bill’s enthusiasm for old cars. Alyssa is a slugger for the California Waves, a fast pitch softball team associated with the ASA. Both kids attend Verdugo Hills High School who’s claim to fame is that it is the Alma Mater of the Smothers Brothers. Bill worked in Albuquerque as a contractor for the Forest Service in Budget and Finance for two years, but recently transferred home.. He belonged to the Rose City Chorus in Pasadena in the 80’s and joined the New MexiChords in 2005. Bill sings bass with the chorus, likes to ski, mountain bike, scuba dive and work on old cars. (Ed—we miss you Bud!)

### Chapter Eternal

#### Darrell Dillon

—2007



Darrell recently passed away suddenly. He was a former member and our MC for the 2005 Christmas show!

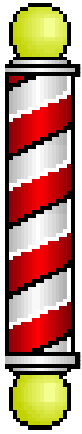
# ***Barbershop Harmony Society***

**Albuquerque Chapter of SPEBSQSA**

**2126 Rivers Edge DR NE**

**Rio Rancho, NM 87144**

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Postage  
Here**



To Barbershop Harmony Fan

## ***New MexiChords Calendar***

RMD Spring Convention, Ogden, UT	Apr 27 - 29
NMC Annual Show, NHCC	May 12
Guest Night	May 22
BHS International Convention, Denver	Jul 1 - 8
Silverton Music Festival	Jul 21
Harmony University	Jul 29 –Aug 4
NMC Retreat, Socorro	Aug 10 - 12
NM State Fair	Sep 7 - 23
RMD Fall Convention, ALBQ	Sep 28 – 30
Balloon Fiesta	Oct 6 - 14
Sweet Adeline's International	Oct 9 - 13
Christmas Shows (3)	Dec 8—9
River of Lights, Bio Park	Dec 11 / 18

## ***New MexiChords***

### ***Mission Statement***

The members of the Albuquerque Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society dedicate themselves to:

- Continually seek the joy to be found in singing well in the barbershop style,
- Promote the benefits of our hobby at every available opportunity,
- Provide our community with high quality musical entertainment, and
- Foster continual musical growth and fellowship among the members.

### ***Vision Statement***

It is the vision of our chapter to achieve continuous improvement in our music, presentation, and singing, and to achieve a high level of performance.