

The **DIAMOND STATE CHORUS**

Diamond STATEment

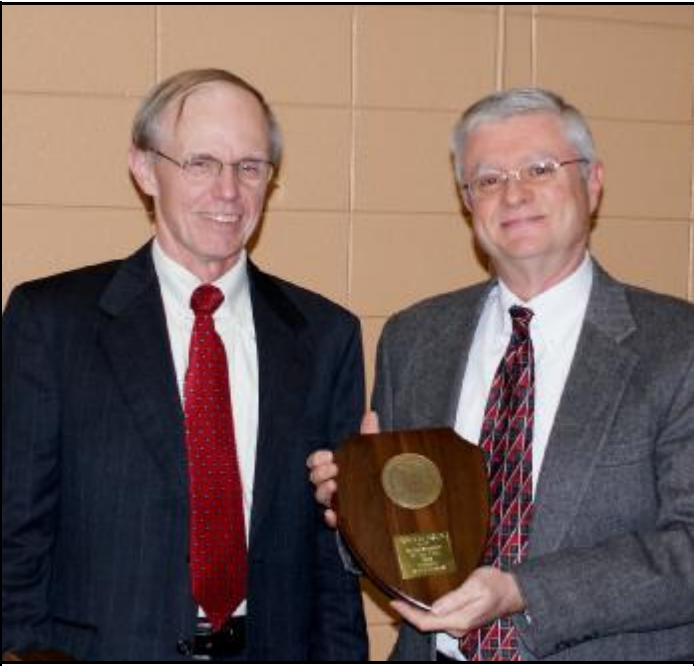
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The Multiple Award Winning Newsletter
of the Greater Little Rock Chapter of
the Barbershop Harmony Society

Tom Calhoun is BOTY



2008 BOTY Tom Calhoun (right) with 2007 BOTY Richard Zelnick

Tom Calhoun was selected to be the Barbershopper of the Year 2008. He has been a member less than a year but hit the ground running. He assumed many duties in public relations when **Bruce Dabbs** was unable to spend full time on the job. This prestigious award is determined by a vote of the chapter conducted by the prior winner, in this case by **Richard Zelnick**.

Give Me Those Valentine Memories by Tom Calhoun

In about a month we will be performing one of our biggest fund raising activities of the year: Singing Valentines. As you may know, we are trying to keep our expenditures low this year. One of the best ways to lower expenses is to get FREE advertising. Singing Valentines is great for this for several reasons.

Clearly, what we deliver is a unique and emotionally satisfying (we hope) gift. Also, delivering a valentine puts us right into the mainstream. We don't have to worry about name recognition when we say "valentine." So we want free advertising, and we have a well-known product. What's missing? The answer is: "a hook." A hook is the reason why what we are doing is news. Our singing valentines are pretty unusual, but we have been doing them for several years, so simply saying that we are doing it again is not news (or not as much as it used to be). What I would like to be able to do is provide to the print media some background and color about our deliveries. Here is where you can help: Send me an Email describing briefly one or more memorable, funny or unusual valentine deliveries you have made. I will put a few of these into an article and pitch it to the print media. A feature story in the Democrat-Gazette would be worth the equivalent of several hundred dollars in paid advertising. But, I need your input - SOON. Thanks in advance!

Installation Banquet

It was a cold and wintry night. Rain and sleet were falling. Overpasses were slick. Traffic was slow and heavy and there were nu-

Following a superb meal of prime rib and chicken, supplemented by a variety of vegetables and topped off by a strawberry shortcake, Paula called upon **Richard Zel-**

presenting to him the coveted award of Barbershopper of the Year.

Then, **George Tribble** was called upon to officially install the officers. The audience groaned when



2009 Leadership. Jeff Nash, Rip Ripley, Dick Muse, Terry Mercing, Bob Cox, Todd Tucker, Tom Calhoun. Photo by **Gary Hawkins** using **George Tribble's** camera.



Emcee **Paula Steinziek**

merous accidents. Some streets were closed, especially north of Little Rock. Yet some 50-60 members, families, and guests of the Greater Little Rock Chapter made it to the North Little Rock United Methodist Church for the annual Officer Installation and Awards Banquet.

A great time was had by all. **Paula Steinziek** was the emcee for the evening and did a great job.

nick to announce the Barbershopper of the Year. Instead, **Elwin Jones** usurped the podium to make a special presentation of plaques to **Bob Cox** and **Richard "Rip" Ripley** for years of outstanding service a s



George Tribble, who installed the officers for 2009

Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. Richard was again called to the podium and this time he came up and extolled the virtues of **Thomas J. "Tom" Calhoun** before

he began with a joke, but the joke was funny and the audience responded appropriately. George called on all the officers and Director **Don Snow** to join him behind the podium, and they did, all except **Tim Copeland** who could not get there because of the weather.



Gary Hawkins, back from Iraq

(See photo and accompanying ver- see **Banquet** (Continued on page 3)

THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

by Don Snow

2009 is upon us and all I can say is ... "hold on tight men!"

We have a New Year, new music, new goals, and new successes ahead! 2009 could be our best year ever! Our first song, "It's A Brand New Day" serves as our theme for the year and I hope you enjoy our new teaching approach and the variety of songs chosen by your music team.

Your music team has gathered and/or e-conferenced many times over the last few months to provide you with the best learning opportunity and we have nine, yes – count 'em, nine new songs with learning tracks and music available to you on our website weeks ahead of the scheduled introduction dates. Something completely new for you, each Monday night we will provide you with the music scheduled for the next rehearsal. That means you



Don Snow, right, esteemed musical director of the Diamond State Chorus show with wife **Sheri** at the installation banquet.

will know in advance what we will be singing on any given Monday from now to the end of the year.

Everyone who wants to learn will have their shot! We have special rehearsal nights dedicated to introduce each new song and we have unique craft sessions planned for every rehearsal designed to enhance your singing

skills and solidify your performances. We are working on providing custom vocal assessment and training for our members.

2009 is going to be packed with musical variety, fun, fellowship, and new music. I am ready to hit the ground running, and I hope you are too!

Banquet (Continued from page 2)

biage for their names.) George invited all chapter members to stand in place so they could be sworn to do their duty to the Diamond State Chorus during 2009, and then asked all the others in attendance to



Betsy White and Paula Steinziek.

also stand and swear to support the chapter this year. Then he asked everyone to promise to do their duty, they replied "I do", and George declared them all officially installed, and everyone sat down.

It was great to see **Burt and Peggy Wilkerson** (Burt pronounced the opening prayer), special guests **Frances Bing and Betsy White**, returning member **Gary Hawkins**, and all the family members that we don't get to

see often enough.

The final speaker of the evening was **Dick Muse**, who, as outgoing President, spoke of how much he appreciates the Greater Little Rock Chapter and the people in it.

Paula got emotional as she recalled what the chapter had meant to her late father, **Julian White**, whose widow, **Betsy White**, was in attendance.

As far as we know, everyone made it home again despite the bad weather.



Frances Bing, widow of Al Bing who was our most prolific member recruiter who had more than 20 men of note awards. **Gloria Koschmann** is in the background.

Musical Notes

Ken Zahrt, M&PVP

Wow! It's a whole new year already. This is always a fun time of the year because we get to shed off all the things we should have done last year and think forward to the things we could/should do this year. Should-a, would-a, could-a...

One of the nice things this year is that we can all look back to 2008 as a good year for the GLR chapter. Not only did we host a great District convention, but we can also be proud of our musical accomplishments. The chorus in which I was singing in December of 2008 was noticeably better than the one in which I sang back in January. As my brother would say, "Ya done good!"

Another nice thing is the music plan we have for 2009. We've put some of the songs we've gotten a bit tired of to bed and selected a great list of new songs to learn. We have carefully chosen these songs to be enjoyable and fun to sing, and of a level that will allow us to continue to improve our singing.



Andrew Skinner's daughters. This is a much better image than one of Ken Zahrt.

In fact, that is our primary goal this year – to improve the primal level of singing in the chorus. What do I mean by this? The primal level of anything we do is the level at which we automatically perform that task when we are not thinking about it. Now, this may be because we are just mindlessly wandering along (some of us more than others!), or it may be because we are burdened with other tasks, such as learning choreography, working interpretation or even simply learning a new song.

When you are first reading a new song, imagine the difference if, instead of struggling to breathe, you always had air available; if, instead of working hard to croak out some kind of noise, your soft palette was always elevated, your throat was always open and you

effortlessly produced a resonant sound. All this, without even thinking about it. Wouldn't that be great?

We can do this, and as a result have more fun, and I think that your music leadership has come up with some excellent ideas for accomplishing this in the coming year. You will notice some changes to our meeting nights. We will be reorganizing the format of the evening, to never spend too much time on any one thing and to keep things moving. I'll let Todd talk more about the details of the meeting night program, but musically, we're going to be keeping things fresh. The evening should fly by and when 10:00 rolls around, it should be a surprise that it got here so quickly.

All of this, of course, requires help from all of us. We owe it to the guys standing around us on the risers who deserve to get the most enjoyment out of the evening. We owe it to the leadership who spends time preparing for our meetings and finding ways to help us be the best that we can be. We even owe it to ourselves, who are in this hobby for the enjoyment that good songs sung well in the company of close friends can bring.

What do we owe? I'll let the other officers talk about other ways in which we all need to contribute. Musically, we each need to find some time between rehearsals to practice and learn our music. Your Music Leadership Team stands committed to help you in any way possible to achieve this; for example, we will be providing learning tracks for all songs that we will be learning this year. When at rehearsal, we need to pay attention to the man up front, whoever he may be, and do our best to do what he asks of us. If we do these things, one evening we'll realize that we're having more fun than ever before and working less at it.

Wouldn't that be great?

It's A Brand New Day!

Terry Mercing, Membership VP

2009 is here! By his choice of our first new song for the year Don has chosen our theme for the year. As you know we were unable to introduce the song January 5th because we had to cancel the rehearsal due to icy roads. Tonight you will get to learn how much fun it is to sing and how good it sounds. It is pure Barbershop!

But it is more than just a good song. It is going to be our message for the year. Our chorus has progressed musically and in the amount of fun and joy we get from our singing. That has brought us to this Brand New Day and now we have to decide how we will use the skills and momentum that we have to move forward.

My part of the Brand New Day concerns our membership. My efforts will be focused both on serving our current members and providing outlets for us to recruit new singers. We will put more emphasis on recognizing member accomplishments. We will put more emphasis on keeping up with our members who miss meetings, become ill, or otherwise need attention and support from us, both individually and collectively.

Each of us this year must recognize continuously that we are looking for new singers. We will each have opportunities to be enthusiastic with someone who has expressed interest in singing like we do. We must become ambassadors of membership for our chapter. To that end we will provide you with more tools to use. We have membership cards; we must ensure that each of you has a supply. We will

update and distribute a new membership flyer. I will ask Tom Calhoun, our Marketing VP to assist in that project.

We will have more public performances so that people can see and here us. Some of those will be small performances where we will sing to a very large number of folks in a relatively short time period.

We will schedule membership events in conjunction with our regular meetings, and in conjunction with our show and Valentines. I will publish dates and outlines of activities, in cooperation with Tom Calhoun to ensure good publicity and a good opportunity to meet new membership prospects.



Jenny and Terry Mercing shown at the 2007 Awards and Installation banquet.

Until I announce those specific dates and plans my request is that you take personal responsibility to make 2009 a Brand New Day for our chorus. Please attend all rehearsals. Please take advantage of the new tools that Ken Zahrt, Richard Zelnick and Don are making available to give us access to our music on our website, both in printed and recorded formats. Please download and learn your music on you own. Think about how much more we can accomplish if Don does not have to teach us words and notes. We need for him

to polish and refine the songs and make them performance ready.

Let's all work together to enhance the joy in our hobby, to enhance the music and performance in our hobby, and to enhance the size of our chorus and the morale of our chorus.

It is indeed a Brand New Day! Let the fun and music begin.



Rip Ripley and Bob Cox shown with plaques presented by **Elwin Jones** in recognition and appreciation of jobs well done



The **Diamond State Chorus** performing at Park Plaza in November.

Birthdays

Don Snow	Jan 8
Danny Gililand	Jan 11
Mike White	Jan 12
Ron McConnaughey	Jan 22
Marv chism	Jan 26
Larry Walton	Jan 27
Lou Anderson	Jan 29
Bob Cox	Feb 9
Ed Frazier	Feb 10
Lynn Schatz	Feb 14
Pops Francis	Feb 18
Art Bohannon	Feb 20
Tim Copeland	Feb 22
Ken Phillips	Feb 24
Arthur Dercksen	Feb 24
Terry Mercing	Feb 26

Anniversaries

Darlene & Lou Anderson	Jan 14
Wanda & Jim Linsley	Jan 24
Lynda & Danny Gililand	Feb 24



Some of the throng being served at the installation banquet. The meal was catered by Golden Corral.

CHAPTER BOARD MEETS TO MAP OUT GOALS FOR THE YEAR

by Tim Copeland

On Thursday, December 11th, the Board met at Pulasaki Technical College and spent nearly three hours discussing plans for the year. By the end of the night, a series of strategies had been developed in support of the following three goals:

1. **Improve the experience of being a chapter member**
2. **Raise the visibility of the chorus in the community**
3. **Increase the number and quality of chorus members**

Strategies were developed with the intent of accomplishing these goals and assignments were made among the various members of the board. The board discussed ways to improve the use of rehearsal time, increasing utilization of the chapter website, and ideas to support members in recruitment efforts.

The plan will be reviewed at each board meeting to assess progress. A copy of the plan is being made available on the members' only section of the web-

site (Coming Soon!). Please feel free to review the plan and provide comments to any board members. If you see any changes you like to the way we are going business, let us know. We want to know that we are on the right track!



2009 President **Tim Copeland** shown in February belatedly presenting a plaque to the 2007 BOTY **Richard Zelnick**

Chapter Financial Recap

by Richard "Rip" Ripley

Income:

Annual Show	\$ 8,721
Banquet	840
Youth Activities	2,000
Chapter Dues	4,388
Performance Fees	300
Valentines	7,109
Miscellaneous	1,330
Total Income	\$24,688

Expense:

Annual Show	\$ 8,672
Chapter Admin	7,871
Scholarship Exp	2,000
Membership	550
Music and Supplies	350
Valentines	4,706
Total	\$24,150



Fireworks and lighted capitol on December 6, 2008.



Twenty members of **The Diamond State Chorus** performing at the State Capitol Tree Lighting on December 6, 2008. Three or four are actually watching director **Terry Mercing**.

Coming Events

Mid Winter Convention

Jan. 27- Feb 1
Pasadena, CA

Singing Valentines

February 14/15
Valentine Central ??

2009 NW & SW Divisions and International Prelim:

March 20-22
San Marcos, TX

2009 NE Division Convention:

March 13-15
Shreveport, LA

International Convention

June 28-July 5
Anaheim, CA

2009 Greater Little Rock Chapter Annual Show:

July 18
UALR Theater
Headliner Quartet—Eureka

2009 SWD Convention Details:

October 23-25
Little Rock, AR

Year 2009 Leadership

Board Members:

President	Tim Copeland
Secretary	Bob Cox
Treasurer	Rip Ripley
VP Music	Ken Zahrt
VP Devel/Mktg	Tom Calhoun
VP Membership	Terry Mercing
VP Program	Todd Tucker
Board	Jeff Nash
Past President	Dick Muse

Chorus Music Directors:

Music Director	Don Snow
Other Director	Terry Mercing

Section Leaders:

Tenor Lead	Ken Zahrt
Asst	Elwin Jones
Bari	Steve Purdy
Bass	Terry Mercing
Asst	Larry Walton

Committee Chairmen:

Show	Mercing/Jones
Scholarship	Jeff Nash
Valentines	Tim Copeland

Special Assignments:

Performance Coord.	Tim Copeland
Uniform Manager	Elwin Jones
Librarian	Todd Tucker
Bulletin Editor	George Tribble
Chapter Historian	George Tribble
Web Master	Richard Zelnick
Staff Photographers	Gary Hawkins Richard Zelnick

District/Society Officers:

SWD Distr. VP	Terry Mercing
Chapter Support Rep	Elwin Jones

DSC Chapter Sup. Rep

Contacts:

Greater Little Rock web site—
[www. Diamondstatechorus.com](http://www.Diamondstatechorus.com)
Telephone 501-791-SING (7464)
Society web site - www.barbershop.org
Soutwestern District web site - www.swd.org