

COLORADO IDAHO KANSAS MONTANA NEBRASKA

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Singing Valentines Across the RMD

Thanks, Carl Schultz for forwarding this

Report of Singing Valentines 2008

By Don A. York

This time each year, for the last 10 years, the three barbershop harmony choruses in the Albuquerque area do "Singing Valentines." There are two men's choruses, the *New Mexi-Chords* and the *Duke City Chorus*, and one women's chorus *Enchanted Mesa* (Sweet Adelines), involved. We all get together, form quartets, and sing to "your sweetie." For \$50.00 we send a uniformed quartet to anywhere in the metro area (home, office, factory, restaurant, bar, construction site) and sing two love songs to your sweetie and present him/her with a long-stem rose, a 1/2-box of Russell Stover chocolate candy, and a greeting card with your sentiments.

This year we fielded 15 quartets, that's 60 singers. In all, we did 212 face-to-face gigs. The gigs are scheduled 30 minutes apart. We try to schedule quartets by postal ZIP codes to reduce cross-town driving. This year we had a marriage proposal at the end of one gig. That happens quite often, even in front of an audience. For \$10.00 we send a singing valentine over the telephone to anywhere in the continental United States. This year we did 22 of these. We made a lot of people happy. My part? I worked in Valentine Central where we take orders, schedule sing outs, conduct publicity, etc. It takes two weeks in Valentine Central each year to pull this off.

This year we took in \$10,900.00, had expenses of \$3,500.00, and a profit of \$7,400.00. The profit will be split between the three chapters, based upon number of gigs sung by each quartet member. What will we do with the money? Good question. Some will go for new uniforms, rent on meeting places, and music. A large portion of the money goes to other charities and high school students. Yes, we take boys and girls to New Mexico Tech in Socorro, New Mexico, for a four-day, three-night Youth Harmony Camp. We pay for half of the cost, about \$150/student. Why do we do this? To perpetuate our art form.

Happy Valentine's Day

Albuquerque
New Mexi-Chords

Bernalillo County
Duke City Chorus

Montrose
Black Canyon Chorus

Pikes Peak
America the Beautiful Chorus

Boulder
Timberliners Chorus

Mt. Rushmore
Shrine of Democracy Chorus

Longmont
Long's Peak Chorus

Durango
Narrow Gauge Chorus

Grand Junction
Bookcliff Chorus

D. MountainAires

Pocatello
Idaho Gateway Chorus

Billings
Big Sky Chorus

Denver Mile High
Sound of the Rockies

Montrose, Colorado

Thanks, Bill Sutton, editor

A Valentine's Sing is a Beautiful Thing but it Ain't Easy!

Fourmata becomes Fourmatagain becomes Fourmatafied

It all started a couple of weeks before Valentine's Day when Gary informed the rest of the quartet that he may NOT be able to take personal leave on Feb. 14. The reason was a policy of the school system saying NO TEACHERS could take off the day BEFORE any four day weekend. And President's Day would be a four-day weekend. Bummer. Gary tried but was denied. So a search began for a substitute. TENORS are not abundant and the only one we thought was not committed was Carmicheal. Turned out we were wrong. He was obligated to sing LEAD on Valentine's Day for the quartet in Cedaredge. Then Sam suggested **Bob Goodhue**, previous LEAD for local famous quartet *Sound Production*. Our hope was that Bob could learn BARI-TONE in a week, and Sam, who sang tenor for that quartet, could sing TENOR. Let's see, uh, our BARITONE Dave would sing LEAD while our LEAD Sam would sing TENOR, so Bob the LEAD could sing BARI-TONE. leaving Bill the BASS who sang TENOR before stayed as BASS. A little confusing, to say the least.

It was pretty scary as well since there were no opportunities for any practices 'cuz Dave was headed to California to visit his brother and wouldn't be back until late Feb. 13. One hasty practice the night before Dave left for California proved it could work. So we told Larry we could sing. He was relieved as he was afraid there would not be an adequate number of available quartets. Dave had earlier planned his return flight so he could be back in Montrose late Wednesday evening. We requested a late morning Thursday schedule to permit us to do another practice at 9:00 am. Larry acknowledged by scheduling a couple of late morning reservations for us along with several more in the afternoon. I just love it when a plan comes together.

Except, and this is a big except, Dave called late Wednesday evening with the bad news he was stranded in Salt Lake City due to heavy snow. No flights until the next morning. Bummer. So Snyder and his group were contacted and rose to the challenge of driving from Cedaredge to Montrose to cover the morning gigs and then back to Delta to satisfy their own schedule. A panicked **Fourmortified** trio kept their fingers crossed that Dave could get an early flight out of SLC to Grand Junction so he could be back to Montrose in time to do the afternoon sings. He barely made it so we did. He got to his house just in time to change clothes to head out for our first sing at 1:30. Whew! But it was worth it.

There were other hoops to be jumped through for the other quartets. It was not an easy day for any quartet but the day was wonderful in spite of the troubles and the snow. We sang to a teacher in her third grade class and the kids were incredible. We sang to a nice lady you all know after we interrupted their competition bridge group and saw the tears form on her face with even some on the face of her grumpy husband. We sang to a male resident of the Chalet and his appreciation was touching, even though he had been in the bathroom when we arrived and

Happy Valentine's Day

forgot to zip up. It was a little tough to sing a love song to an open fly, but we tried. We sang to a secretary who was touched and slightly embarrassed by the audience of other office employees that gathered to listen. We sang to a physically challenged lady and her husband who made us all choke up. And, to top it off, we sang for free coffee at Starbucks. What a fine day. We're glad Dave made it back and we did miss Gary. We had promised to visit him at Olathe HS to sing with him to his office gals but Dave's travel problem put a kink in that plan. Big thanks to Bob G. for his fine efforts.

The Cupid Caper

By Don "Tin Ear" Dufva

Big Larry "Book Man" Wilkinson called the gang of four together for a strategy meeting. We arrived one at a time. **Sally "Sugar Cookie" Wilkinson**. We don't stop singing because we was patrolling the perimeter. **Duane "The Fixer" Morris** was first on the scene. He entered the compound slowly, cautiously watching for signs of get old, we get old because we stop trouble. **Jason "Numbers" Ward** soon followed. I was late. They call me **Don "Tin Ear" Dufva** among other things less flattering.

It was Valentines Day and we knew we were in trouble. There were four of us and at least ten of them. This called for precision timing and a hit and run attitude. Our first four gigs included three guys. You ever try to sing a love song to a guy with all his buddies backing him up? This could get ugly. Turns out they were all righteous dudes and we left them laughing. We moved fast, finding our targets and doing what needed to be done.

Turns out we took a serious hit before the day was half over. **Duane "The Fixer"** went down. He was game to continue singing but his condition was getting worse by the minute. We've all been there, stomach goes bad, what cha gonna do? By a vote of three to one it was decided that *"The Fixer"* needed some fixing of his own. We sent him on his way. Things looked bad. We had to bring in a specialist but who? It seemed obvious. The only man in town with the street smarts to complete the contract was **Tom "The Scalpel" Chamberlain**. What if he was on another job?

We dialed him up and waited anxiously as his phone rang once, twice, three times. And then to our relief he picked up. He was available and met us at the Surgical Center for our next gig. I won't go into details but let me say this. There were tears, lots of tears. We were rewarded by a kiss on each of our cheeks. *"The Scalpel"* fit with the rest of the gang like a black jack in a well trained hand. We worked our way through town from one set-up to the next.

Finally we reached our last target. They called out the dogs on us but we stood our ground. The weenie dog variation was obviously bred to come in low and fast. He did exactly that but soon backed off knowing he had met his match. The Shih Tzu mix was another story. We almost lost our composure as she sat up big and tall right in front of the quartet, looking from one of us to the other the whole time we sang. Talk about a distraction, she was it! The day ended peacefully enough and word on the street is that *"The Fixer"* is much improved as I fight the deadline imposed by **Willie "Words" Sutton**. Would we ever go through this again? Yea, we probably would.

Sharing Valentine's Day 2008

Montrose Memories by Chuck Frush

On February 13th, when I checked the weather report, it looked like we would be singing in the snow. Montrose was on the edge of a projected storm that looked like it would dump up to six inches of wet snow on the area. That was not good news, since the members of the **Blue Denim** quartet planned to get together at 8:30 in Olathe to warm-up. We were scheduled to deliver our first Singing Valentine at 9:00 am. As it turned out, it didn't snow all that much, and we kept busy singing from 8:30 am until after 9:00 in the evening, with a lot of people smiling as they became involved in the loving mood of Valentine's day. Usually, the **Blue Denim** quartet covers Montrose, and stays pretty busy singing all day.

For 2008, we took over singing in Delta and Olathe, and as the day began, we only had four paid Singing Valentines to deliver. The economy might be slower this year, but that didn't slow us down. We had a comfortable list of places to sing that included several shut-ins that were members of Vern's church, and several other people that we wanted to sing to.

By the end of the day, we had sung the standard pair of sweetheart songs over 50 times, and we had also sung several other songs that seemed like the right thing to do at the time. Needless to say, we kept busy all day! We were getting close to being finished in the middle of the afternoon, and already in Olathe, getting ready to sing at Colorow Care Center. We got a call alerting us to sing again in Delta at the City Market, and again in the evening at Smugglers in exchange for dinners there.

So, back to Delta we went to sing to one of the checkout girls at City Market. That got us back to Colorow in Olathe just in time to sing at a party that was going on when we got there. We were delayed by the extra singout in Delta so it turned out to be perfect timing singing at Colorow. The energy we felt there was some of the best we have experienced at the care center. We have experienced a lot of good energy there in the past. Our performance fit right in, and we could tell that we had reached a large number of people there.

By the time we finished our afternoon singouts, the snow was coming down in greater amounts. We gathered our spouses, and went to Smugglers where we sang about 20 times to a large variety of people at many different tables, over a two hour time interval. Some of those people really appreciated hearing us sing, including several kids from the age of one to ten. We think there might have even been a future barbershopper amongst them, since one boy seemed to pick up the lyrics and sang with us right away.

By the time we finished our meals, our voices were almost finished, too! We got several requests to return to tables where we had sung before, so evidently, in spite of the background noise, we were appreciated most of the time. It seemed that we did get in the way of some of the servers, and they may have been as relieved as our voices were when we were done singing.

After Smugglers, we had one more stop to make. After we finished up around 8:30 pm, we went over to Gretchen LeGault's for "dessert." As most of you remember, she is the surviving wife of "Big John" a fellow member who passed away last year. Her appreciation for barbershop harmony is legendary, and it supplied us new energy so that we could sing quite a few good songs before we wrapped it up for the day. There was a lot less background noise to contend with than there had been at Smugglers, so we could actually appreciate the sound we had after about 12 hours of practice during the day.

Needless to say, we will remember some very special moments that happened at quite a few of the places we sang during the day. There is no doubt that Valentine's day gives us a good excuse to go share our hobby with a large number of wonderful people, and the singing experience is definitely win-win. Everyone I have talked to that has had the opportunity to be part of a quartet on Valentine's day delivering Singing Valentines, has told me that it is the most fun singing day of the year. And for us this year was no exception! I was sure glad that the bad cold I had earlier in the week relented sufficiently to let me be part of such a nice experience!



Colorado Springs, Colo. Pikes Peak Chapter

Submitted by Neil Ridenour

It's just a numbers game as Cupid's 4 Sing 13 in 11

On Valentine's Day, the **Cupid's 4** quartet: **Fred Draney**, tenor, **Neil Ridenour**, lead, **John Megow**, bari, **Doug Simpson**, bass, performed 13 gigs scheduled throughout the day covering over 11 hours. We had several interesting reactions, but the one that was most unique was the one Fred contracted for only the night before. It was at a pre-school in a church on the north side. For the tiny tots and their teachers, it was "Pajama Day" which meant our intended recipient was in her silk pajamas and was wearing huge bunny slippers that were bigger than some of her students! We sang our first song to her and her class, then they brought in the next-door class and teacher while we sang our second song. A child exclaimed "great!" at the end of that one and the rest of the classes (about 30 kids total) had by then come into the classroom. So we sang one more to all of them.

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Fred also had a good idea when we had over an hour between gigs on the far north side and he suggested we drop in on Memorial Hospital North. We sang on every floor (all five!) and had an especially good time in the new mother/baby ward which was a wide open oval-shaped space. Since it wasn't appropriate to go into the rooms, the nurses opened the ladies' doors so they could peek out, while **Cupid's 4** formed a circle to project in all directions for a great sound. All in all, it was a great time.

We were escorted to all gigs by Doug's Lexus. Doug also made dinner which we ate between gigs at my house. John took care of the flowers and Fred handled the cards. We had a great time amid the happy tears of the recipients (we had a few of those). We expect Doug to soon receive emails of some of the pictures taken by the boyfriends, husbands and co-workers of our recipients. And, John provided us with **red socks** which we all wore with our tuxedos to the delight of several recipients. Hey, maybe next year we go out as a quartet named **"Eight Red Socks!"**



Longmont, Colorado

LOTZA VALENTINES SUNG BY LONGMONT QUARTETS

The bottom line was: 87 Singing Valentines were sold, 307 people heard a quartet. 102 roses were given away. The chapter fielded five quartets involving 27, including singers, subs and drivers, and camera men. **Paul West**, Singing Valentines chairman, said we've broken all the chapter records for the last five years. It took unbelievable coordination by **Donna** and **George Bustamante** and so many others to make it all work.



At home, at school, at work, maybe at a restaurant, those dashing men in red caught the surprised sweethearts unawares, and with an old-fashioned love song or two made someone's day a lot brighter





Joe Arnold, tenor, Chad Boltz, lead, Bill Jones, Allen Barker, bass

Heart of my heart, I love you!
 Life would be naught without you.
 Light of my life my darling
 I love you, I love you!
 I can forget you never
 From you I ne'er can sever
 Say you'll been mine forever, I love you!

Boulder Timberliners

Ponderosa Vigilantes Draft New Lead

Written by Merle Quigley, Boulder President

It's Valentines Day. You have 12 gigs scheduled and your lead singer (**Cole Keirse**y not shown) wakes up with influenza, with, of course, no voice. What to do? You reach into your bag of tricks, and call on your chorus director **Chad Boltz** to ask, "Please put on your tuxedo, press your shirt and shine those shoes," Oh yes! "And come sing lead in about two dozen songs with the **Ponderosa Vigilantes** quartet"

Thankfully there are two love songs frequently sung, *Heart Of My Heart* and the old standard *Let Me Call You Sweetheart*. By the end of the day, Chad will be able to tell stories about the day he performed with the **Ponderosa Vigilantes**.

At the **Boulder Timberliners** Tuesday evening practice, as a group of excited guys often do, the **Ponderosa Vigilantes** were trying to talk all at once. They told everyone who would listen what a fantastic experience it is to deliver Singing Valentines. Each of the quartet men couldn't say enough about what a great time they had. Sure they were tired, but what an experience they had singing and laughing all day.

Psychologists speak of the power of music. During one gig, a sweet elderly lady sat with her nurse, seemingly dreaming of something besides listening to the beautiful music. Her nurse kept urging her to listen. "They are singing to you," the nurse kept saying over and over. They made it through *Heart of My Heart* and then handed her the long stem rose and began to sing *Let Me Call You Sweetheart*. She kissed the rose and perhaps remembering some long forgotten time, her tears started to flow. Drawing on some inner strength, while living that moment, the quartet finished the song. It took a few moments before anyone could speak. This is four wonderful guys who will never doubt the power of a song! If you do not sing in a quartet, now is the time to start. Be ready next Valentines Day and you too, will enjoy the thrill of making someone's day a little more precious.



Happy Valentine's Day

SINGING VALENTINES SUCCESS STORIES (AND OTHERS)

Mt. Rushmore Chapter, Rapid City, South Dakota
John Elving, editor



Every year it seems as though there aren't any new stories to be told concerning Singing Valentines. Every year we are proven wrong. This year was no exception.

A great story for the Mt. Rushmore Chapter was that we had four quartets delivering Singing Valentines, with a fifth one almost ready to be used for

"emergency" duty. The only problem with that quartet was that the lead, Clayton Southwick, had virtually no voice.

Another big plus for our chapter this year was being able to deliver 59 or 60 Singing Valentines to appreciative loved ones. That translated into close to \$3000.00 gross income for the day. *(Now if we could do that every month, Treasurer Jim Gogolin would be VERY happy! Ed.)*

Speaking of Jim Gogolin, his new quartet, **Heart of the Hills**, had one of the more memorable deliveries of this, or any other year. They delivered a Singing Valentine to one "gentleman" who was none too happy about it. He was apparently heard to say, "That B.... spent 45 bucks on this!" Suddenly the quartet wanted to sing *How can I Miss You If You Won't Go Away*. See you in divorce court!

Before we go any further, let me applaud our first-year chairman, Pete Stach for the great job he did in lining ev-



Heart of the Hills
Fr Jim Gogolin, Alan Schulte, Greg Iverson, Ken Wootten

everything up in advance. His expertise in working with Excel made seeing who was where at what times easy this year.



Wednesday Scheduling
Fr, Del Beck, Greg Iverson, Pete Stach's arm.

photo by Alan Schulte

Thanks for taking this on this year, Pete (NA).

Also, a big thank you to the men who took the late incoming phone calls at Valentine Central – Steve Ferley, Henry Bradshaw, John Elving and Bill Andersen. And thank you Loretta for being there with Bill.

Of course we can't leave out the other quartets and their drivers. **Risky Business** with Doug Nahrgang and three past members, were busy, including singing at the Rotary Club luncheon. **Black Hills Blend** was busy all day. They were driven around by Denny Dodge. **High Mileage**, with driver and fill in tenor David L'Esperance also thrilled their unsuspecting recipients.

We also need to thank Epic Signs for donating space on their electronic billboards around town for advertising. A big thank you also goes out to Mike Sanborn for donating the advertising design for those billboards.

Last, but certainly not least, we need to thank those who came early to take care of a thorny situation. Besides the quartet members who were there early to trim the roses and wrap them, Jason Dannenbring was willing to spend part of his day before going to United Blood Center to donate to his favorite charity – Nicki!

Let's begin right now for next year. A new song will be introduced as requested by many who ordered Singing Valentines. With what we experienced this year, we should be able to deliver to 100 lucky loved ones.



Happy Valentine's Day



First Class Delivery quartet poses after singing for Bob Kunkel. Left to right: John Randolph, tenor; Chris Hendley, lead; Bob Kunkel, recipient; Niles Bruno, bass; Pete Peterson, baritone. In front, members of the Heritage Celebration Committee, who were meeting with Bob Kunkel and who arranged for the singing valentine — Carol Bruno, Suzanne Parker, Ruth Lambert.



First Class Delivery quartet sings for Bob Kunkel, Director of Downtown Durango development. Left to right, quartet: John Randolph, tenor; Niles Bruno, bass (foreground); Chris Hendley, lead; Pete Peterson, baritone. At left, Kristi Nelson, watching; Bob Kunkel, recipient.

Singing Valentines in Durango

By Carroll (Pete) Peterson, cmpete@frontier.net

Actually, our Singing Valentine program was too successful! We couldn't handle all the requests that came in. Maxine received 72 requests, but there were four of them that the quartets were not able to get to. Still, that's 68 valentines delivered, with three quartets working most of the day and into the evening. The snowy roads in the morning added some complications, but driving was OK by afternoon. Fortunately, the snowstorm wasn't as bad as predicted.

Anyway, we had a huge success, not only in numbers but in spirit. All three quartets reported great experiences — surprise, embarrassment, joy, laughter, and tears. I know, because I witnessed it first hand, that the singers brought much pleasure to the recipients, as well as to the people who ordered the valentines and the people who delivered them. The *In Accord* quartet reports an especially moving experience at Mercy Hospital when a woman who was with her dying mother asked them to come in the room to sing. It's easy to picture the tears all around—mother, daughter, as well as quartet members.

First Class Delivery (my quartet) started out the day singing for a first grader at Park School at 8:00 am. His mother hovered just outside the door. As we walked in, the first graders all followed us with their eyes as big as saucers and their mouths agape. One little guy asked me, "Are you rich?" It turned out he was the one we were singing for. Our uniforms must have impressed him.

Durango A Cappella sang to a mechanic in a car repair shop who stayed under the car while they sang for him! They also sang for a lady who was upstairs in bed awaiting the attentions of her valentine giver.

Maxine Peterson, who was the administrator of Valentine Central, says: "Thanks to all you barbershoppers who ordered valentines. Members of the chapter also sold many valentines to their friends and families. I don't have all the figures, but my guess is that nearly half of the 72 requests came as the result of your personal orders or your sales to others. That's wonderful! Good work, guys! Special thanks to **Danny McManus** for conducting a good advertising campaign. Most thanks should go to the three quartets that gave such generous amounts of energy and time to this project. And thanks for not complaining when I sent you gallivanting all over the county! And kept you working from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm. I think that next year we have to have a fourth quartet, but it has to be as good as the three we had working this year! We have set a high standard which we'll have to keep up."

About the time we quarteters were finishing our day, the Valentine VLQ started their evening of singing in downtown restaurants. Amy reports that she and six men made up the VLQ — **Grover Barker, Danny McManus, Jay Alsop, True Kirk, John Bratsch, and Bill Holmes**. She says they received lots of applause and smiling faces to pay for their efforts. Between 6:00 and 8:00 pm they went to a bunch of restaurants, among them the Palace, Francisco's, Ken and Sue's, Seasons, Cypress, Mutu's, the Ore House, Ariano's, Randy's, Cosmo, Farquahrt's, and even Mama's Boy up at 27th and Main. Wow, what a labor of love that was!

That means that nineteen people from the chapter were involved on Valentine's Day. I think that's really great — 19 of the approximately 25 active participants in the chapter! We made a lot of money for the chapter and we earned an immeasurable amount of good will from the community. Maxine has not finished calculating the net profit yet, but it should be up around \$1800.

Grover Barker worked two shifts. He was the baritone for the *Durango A Cappella* quartet in the morning, starting at about 7:00 am, and then he sang with the VLQ in the evening till 8:00 pm. That's dedication. I think all of us who spent the day singing were pretty tired out, but we'll remember how tired we were for maybe two weeks, and then we'll forget and for the other fifty weeks we will remember what a thrill it was to get to share our harmonies around La Plata County.

Happy Valentine's Day

We charged \$40.00 and provided a card, a live rose and a small box of Enstrom's Toffee along with two Valentine Songs. We advertised on the radio and on TV and had posters all over town. After expenses the chapter netted about \$5,700. A great time was had by all! We even had to turn down some requests that could have been filled if we had more quartets, and that will be our goal next year...more quartets.

Singing Valentine Stories

The stories that come back after Valentine singing are always priceless. Some are humorous and some cause listeners to become melancholy, but they all mean that what we are doing is really appreciated by the people who hear us. The following stories came back from the Grand Junction Chapter quartets:

First Grade – The best Singing Valentines are the ones that are done at the “spur of the moment.” Our quartet, **Spare Parts**, delivered one like that on our February 13th route after singing to a first grade teacher in an elementary school in Fruita, Colorado. After checking in at the front desk of the school we were led down the hall to one of four 1st grade classes at that school. It hit me all at once that I had two granddaughters in that school and I should have planned to sing to them while there. After singing to the teacher I asked our guide if she knew what room my 1st grade granddaughter was in.

It happened that she was just across the hall so we went in and asked the teacher if we could sing to her. The teacher was very accommodating and said it was ok. She then asked the class if any of them recognized any of the men coming into the classroom. My Katy raised her hand slowly and said “Grandpa.” We moved over to her desk and sang *Let me call you Sweet-heart*. She put her hands to her head and looked down to her desk and shook as she giggled. When we finished she looked up and the girl sitting next to her leaned over to her and said, “I think that's the Beatles.” We did sing to my 3rd grade granddaughter the next day on our next route. She was very reserved.

Very Young Children – The **Grand Valley Four** quartet sang to some teachers in a classroom and then one of the teachers bought another one on the spot for her daughter and two very young grand children who lived a block away from the school. The children were approximately ages one and three.

The quartet sang a love song to the mother and then decided to sing the medley that contains “Supercalifragilistic-expialidocious” and “Salagadoola-mechikaboola-bibidi-bobbidi-boo” to entertain the children. Later when the grandmother came to see them after school the three year was all excited and told her: “*Grandma! They sang Disney!*”



Grand Valley Four



DURANGO A CAPELLA Mixed Harmony Quartet

L to R: Jennifer Galloway, tenor; Darrell DeFratus, lead;
Terry Galloway, bass; Ed Simons, baritone



IN ACCORD

L to R: Andrew Saletta, tenor, Thom Carden, lead,
Jonti Fox, Bass, Ormond Morford, Bari
Dr. Thom Carden, drthom@durango.net

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

SINGING VALENTINES

The Grand Junction, Colorado chapter had great success in their annual Singing Valentine drive this year. **185 Singing Valentines** were delivered by five quartets. Two quartets each delivered more than 50 Singing Valentines, about 20 on February 13th and about 30 on February 14th. The distribution was as follows by the five chapter quartets:

- **Close Harmony** - 27
- **Four for One** - 30
- **Grand Valley Four** - 50+
- **No Name Quartet** - 26
- **Spare Parts** - 52

Happy Valentine's Day

Machine Shop – The quartet arrived at the machine shop and one guy was out front in the reception area eating a sandwich. He asked who we wanted. We gave him the name and he gave out a dirty laugh. Then he went in the back to get the guy we were to sing to. This fellow was filthy from his work and was covered with tattoos, which included three girls names tattooed around his neck...one in the front and one on each side of his neck. None of the names matched the name of the girl who sent him the Singing Valentine, but we finally spotted her name tattooed on the back of his hand. He was handed the rose, the card and the box of candy and then he said "Thanks" and turned around to leave.

So we told him there was more and we sang a sweet love song. He got embarrassed and in the mean time the guy with the sandwich went in the back and brought out the whole machine shop crew. At that point the recipient turned around and said, "I gotta go, my machine is runnin'..." But we told him there was one more song he had to listen to. All his co-workers started razzing him while we sang. In the end the guy with the tattoos was gracious and he thanked us...but you wonder what he said to his girl friend that night!

Very Elderly – The first Singing Valentine of the day for one quartet was to a middle aged woman from her daughter. She was very moved and kept wiping tears from her face the whole time we sang. Then she gave us each a hug and asked for our card so she could order Singing Valentines for other people. Apparently she took care of elderly people in their homes and she purchased two Singing Valentines for these elderly people. She insisted that the same quartet deliver them, which we did later in the day.

At the one place there was a man and a woman. After much knocking and bell ringing the woman finally opened the door. She led us back to a small room where they had been sitting on the couch, eating and watching television. We handed the woman the rose, the card and the box of candy. The man was very feeble and his jaw was sagging with his mouth open the whole time we were there. He seemed amazed that this was happening in his own home. We sang two or three songs during which his expression never changed, but when we sang *Let Me Call You Sweetheart* his facial expression changed markedly because this was something that touched him. He began to cry and tears ran down his face. In the mean time the woman opened the candy box as soon as it was handed to her and she ate half of it before we were finished singing. Later we received a card from the woman who bought it for them, to thank us and to tell us that this couple kept raving about the quartet and said that they thought we were still there, and the melody lingers on.....

Waitress – We stopped for dinner at a restaurant and when we were through eating we sang a love song to the waitress. The other waitresses came out from the back and everyone listened while we sang to her. When we finished singing one of the other waitresses asked if her husband had sent us to sing to her. She replied sadly that...no, he would never come up with something so nice. She was very moved and told us how much she appreciated our singing to her and that she never had that happen to her before.



Spare Parts

School Teacher – Later in the day the **Grand Valley Four** went to a home to deliver a Singing Valentine to a woman as a gift from her husband. Her two grade school age children and her husband were present while we sang. The woman was obviously moved and teary. She thanked us profusely when we were finished singing. About two weeks later our quartet was singing in the school where the husband was a vocal music teacher, as part of our chapter's **Youth in Harmony** efforts. We sang in all the high schools and all the middle schools in an effort to invite children to sing in our annual show as we have been doing over the past few years. The fellow whose wife we sang to was the teacher in this classroom and he said to us: "Boy! Did I ever make points with my wife for sending her the Singing Valentine?!" Then he asked us the names of the songs that we sang because he and his wife were trying to remember them. Our quartet chose two songs from seven different songs that we sang to the various people and we had to go through them so he could identify which ones we sang to his wife. Then he wrote down the names of the two songs so he could tell his wife. Obviously he was prolonging the "points."

Beautiful Tears of Joy - I have been singing valentines for our chorus for as many years as we have been performing them, over twenty years I'm sure. But this year provided one of the most poignant memories I've yet to experience. As our quartet walked up and rang the doorbell on a small home in our downtown area, we waited patiently for someone to come to the door. Soon the inner door opened and an elderly woman looked out. Seemingly with dismay on her face, she recognized by our uniforms what we must be there for, and she suddenly turned her shoulders to us, put her hands to her face and began to sob. The outer, glassed-in porch door stood between us as she cried, and I said to her, "May we come in?" No response, just continued weeping with her body turned away from us.

It seemed like minutes passed by, but was probably only thirty seconds or so...and then I turned the doorknob and opened the door slightly, thinking that maybe she hadn't quite heard me. "Ma'am....we are here to sing a valentine greeting to you." Still not quite turning to us, she motioned to us to enter. Still sobbing she walked almost blindly toward the couch while we followed and I gently motioned to the couch, saying, "Perhaps you can sit down while we sing to you."

Sitting down, she finally sat with her face to us, still weeping but with a beautiful smile on her face. We sang our first love ballad *Let Me Call You Sweetheart*, and the tears still flowed fully down her cheeks. It was very difficult to sing the song purely without losing it, but we pulled it off. We knew from the card that the sender was her daughter and by now she knew it too, but I'm certain she had known all along. She then told us that she had just gotten home from the hospital that morning. We finished our second song, and she hugged us as we left, the tears still flowing down her cheeks.

We all talked about how difficult that presentation had been for each of us, understanding finally the depth of her emotion - the sure understanding she must have had of the preciousness of this gift in her time of what must have been great stress and fear - a true gift of love from her loved one.



A very strange experience, but most rewarding - As *Close Harmony* attempted to deliver a singing Valentine in the late afternoon on the 14th, we were asked to come back as everyone had not yet arrived. So we obliged them and returned a half hour later. Upon entering the house there was a crowd of (family I think) standing around to greet us. But there in the middle of the room was a lady lying in a hospital type bed with the head of it raised. My impression was that she must have had a severe stroke. Her eyes were closed, her mouth was drawn and no member of her body moved. The family was overjoyed to have us there. As we sang our first song, there was no noticeable response, other than from the family.

Then it happened. As we sang *Let Me call You Sweetheart* her eyes suddenly opened and we knew that we had reached out to her. I think this is the most difficult Singing Valentines I have ever helped to sing. We had some fun sings throughout the day and ended up with a half hour performance for the Redlands Lions Club at the Redlands Community Center. As is our usual Valentines Day trend, we took the wives out to a late dinner at W.W. Peppers. It was a great day!

Kiss YOUR Sweetie!



Singing Valentine sales were down this year, but everyone had a great time delivering them Wednesday and Thursday. We ended up selling 37 "messages of love." Profit should be around \$1,200. Many thanks to **Dick Cable** for buying roses, cards, and candy. They were ably presented by:

Four Cents Postage Due: Warren Van Meter, tenor, Len Wheaton, lead, Bob Dickman, bari, and Al White, bass sang for seven recipients on Wednesday, February 13th. On Thursday, February 14th (the BIG DAY), our other three registered quartets delivered the other 30 Singing Valentines to our sobbing patrons (don't panic, 95% were tears of joy).

Grace Notes: Del Miller, tenor, Joe Gibson, lead, Bob Dickman, bari, and Jerry Hooper, bass delivered ten SV's.

UltraSoniX: David Zoetewey, tenor, Ted Cluett, lead, Tony Pranaitis, bari, and Damian Berger, bass, sang for nine grateful people.

Harmony Emporium: Roger Taylor, tenor, Jack Cozzens, lead, Rex Abelein, bari, and Bob Kaes, bass, delivered 11 SV's. When talking to Jack on the phone Sunday evening, March 2nd, he said that they sang for the nurses at the Cancer Treatment Center (next to Invesco Field in Denver). That was where Rex had his radiation treatments. The ladies took their picture, and gave each guy a copy. That's the picture you see here.



Rex Abelein, Br, Bob Kaes, Bs, Jack Cozzens, L, Roger Taylor, T

Now for the funny part. I asked **Jack Cozzens** if there were any pictures I could use, and he said "yeah, **Bob Kaes** has a copy." Well, I thought Jack said **Bob Dickman**, so I got Dickman on the phone and pestered him for about five minutes until we were both thoroughly confused. I got an article out of him, though (see page 14). Later that evening, I called Jack to motivate him to submit his article, and ask him what was up? After Jack quit laughing at me, he said that he would call Bob K. and ask him to send me a copy. Boy, did I feel silly! Glad I called, though; cuz he was doing his taxes and forgot to write the article!

Happy Valentine's Day

Pocatello, Idaho

DELIVERING SINGING VALENTINES

Thanks to all the quartets that went out and delivered Singing Valentines. From the feedback it sounds like they had a great time. The chapter appreciates your work.

It's Great To Be A Barbershopper

By Brian Foster

What is so great about being a barbershopper? One thing is the great fun it is to deliver singing valentines on Valentine's Day. *Vocal Mischief* spent the whole day delivering singing valentines. The day started at 6:00 am at the Channel 6 TV station where we sang a couple of times. We were busy all day long and finished the day at the Lava Hot Pools dressed in swim trunks and bow ties looking like Chip-n-Dale has beens. The patrons didn't seem to mind our looks, and they said they enjoyed our singing.

One couple was there last year when we sang at the pools and came back in hopes that we would be there again. We sang to lots of women, and a few men in offices, restaurants, hospitals, homes, doctor offices, and schools. We made many laugh, a few cry, and collected a whole bundle of "gold medal moments." It was a great way to spend a day. The Idaho Gateway Chorus also fielded two other quartets — *Soundscape* and *Odd Man Out* and we heard good things about them, too.

According to the records to date, we did 51 plus performances. We have received payment for 46 of these and I understand others have money to turn in. Please do it as soon as possible. Here are our results so far:

Income - \$1620.00 Expenses - \$ 392.00 Profit - \$1228.00

Extra boxes of chocolate candies are for sale at \$2.00 each. See me at the meetings. Let's close out this Valentine event

Harold Catmull, Chairman
hcatmull@hotmail.com



Here is one of our "pick-up" quartets; nice vowels, huh?

A DAPPER LOOKING BILLINGS PICK UP QUARTET

Ira Robison, T; Truman Bovee, L; Bob Saltee, Bs; Jerry Miller, Br

Billings, Montana

Billings Delivers 105 Love Songs

The **Big Sky Chorus** delivered 105 Singing Valentines this year. It was a little down from last year but still pretty good. We had four quartets out most of the day and our net profit around \$3500.00. In addition to our two organized quartets **Checkpointe!** and **Quicksound**, we put together two "pick-up" Valentine quartets. They started working several weeks prior to Valentine's Day and auditioned for the entire chorus before they went out on deliveries. We were proud of them for throwing time and effort towards ensuring a quality product was being delivered!

The best story of the day came from one of the "pick-up" quartets, which included a couple of "first timers." While delivering a pre-scheduled valentine, an observer caught them and asked if they had time available to sing to a hospital patient. One of the more experienced men immediately said "Absolutely!" They delivered a song to a man in the Intensive Care Unit at the hospital. He was in a serious and critical condition - needless to say, our guys had the opportunity to really feel what it means to be a barbershopper. Although it's not unlike other stories we hear each year, it is special in that a couple of "first time" Valentine quartetters unexpectedly experienced a true "gold medal" moment!

Thanks, Brett Foster

Happy Valentine's Day



Gray Jackson, Br, Rod Sgrignoli, L, Gian Porro, Bs, Doyle Cline, T

Denver Mile High quartet *Fastlane* delivers a Singing Valentine

Fastlane also had a great time with singing valentines. This is one of our favorite gigs of the year. Here's a couple of our pictures. This was set-up by the husband of one of the teachers, and as you can see, the whole school was in on it also. We just had to sing *Cruella DeVille* for the kids.

Doyle, Gian, Rod, Gray

This was a lot of fun putting this together. Let's do it again next year. Maybe it can become an annual issue with everyone sharing their Singing Valentine stories and photos.

Do your quartets carry cameras with them when they deliver their messages of caring? It might be a good idea! They could always hand them to someone else to snap the photo; then the editors and webmasters can have them, too, to dress up the wonderful and touching articles that appear each year in your bulletins and on your websites.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?