



The Central States District of the
Barbershop Harmony Society

The Serenade

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Rural Route 4 Observe Two Anniversaries

Editor's Note: The following article was contributed by Willard & Wes Yoder, Don Kahl, Jim Bagby and various RR4 family members, in loving memory of Calvin Yoder, Rufus Kenagy and Everett Roth

Fifty years ago, this fall, four Missouri farmers were crowned Central States District quartet champions. That came a couple of years after they had acquired a 200-point time penalty and finished near the bottom in their first-ever appearance on a barbershop harmony contest stage.

And 40 years ago this July, the two dairy farmers from that original Rural Route 4 quartet, now with city slickers on baritone and tenor, stunned much of the Barbershop Harmony Society (especially themselves) by being announced as INTERNATIONAL QUARTET CHAMPIONS.

It was appropriate that they made their 1976 international debut at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. They finished 21st and had to make new travel/milking plans so they could stay over to be semifinal mic testers. But they began to move up the score sheets, skipping some contest cycles because of farming requirements. (We always kidded that the BHS has no sympathy for men of the soil, scheduling competitions primarily in the spring planting season and during fall harvests!

Members of the first registered foursome were tenor Everett Roth, lead Calvin Yoder, his "little" brother



Four Farm Boys --1976 CSD quartet champs (from left) tenor Ev Roth, lead Calvin Yoder, bass Willard Yoder, bari Rufus Kenagy. Rosie the Cow created by Jim Davis

Mention of that church is important because the original goal of the RR4 was to follow in the footsteps of a Sycamore Grove gospel quartet that included Papa Walter Yoder. It was called, in the church, just "The Men's Quartet." If they sang somewhere else, they were "The Mennonite Quartet."

Willard Yoder was not in the initial foursome when they gathered in 1971 because he was in Indiana finishing two years of Conscience Objectors service. The Mennonites call it Alternate Service, or the 1-W program.

Calvin had earlier performed similar duty in Chicago – also in farm-related activities. Then they bought a herd of black-and-white Holstein cows and began a 26-year partnership they named Yoder Brothers Dairy Farm.

Part of that early 70s quartet was fellow farmer and good friend Coby Shrock, He's of vital importance to the RR4 story. He reacted when Calvin made a comment early on about how much he loved 7th chords. Coby had recently heard our glorious 1968 champs, the Western Continentals, headline the



Kansas City HOA show. He came away with one of their LP's. He loaned it to Calvin.

Calvin's formal musical schooling was limited, but his ear and range was not! From the Continentals' album he took all four parts of "Autumn Leaves" and "Little Town in the Olde County Down." He taught both songs by rote to the RR4, which by now had Willard home and singing bass. The brothers camped in front of Walter's wind-up Edison record player.

The quartet's first coach was Society President Gil Lefholz of the Kansas City Chapter, who went to Cass County to establish a new chapter. Calvin was the logical choice for chorus director, and the small group flourished!

It was Gil who encouraged the RR4 (most of the guys actually lived on Rural Route #2, but that's not much of a quartet name) to compete. He apparently neglected to tell them they needed to be registered as a quartet AND for the 1972 spring contest in St. Joseph, about 60 miles north of KC. But the good CSD convention folks and officials at BHS headquarters in Kenosha got the paperwork done in time for the quartet to enter and perform two Polecat numbers. Gil had advised them that singing faster than slower was generally a better choice in meeting the then-4-to 6-minute rule for each song.

Our guys were speedy enough to collect a time penalty of 210 points for being WAY under time. So instead of placing just outside they top 10, they finished 21 of 23 quartets. Otherwise, Cal, Willy, Ev and Rufus thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

One of their next stops was a visit to Kansas City's Heart of America Chorus, where Bagby had recently succeeded Dan Henry Bowser as chorus director. Dan Henry, as he was known, was the beloved WDAF-TV weatherman, perennial Society MC and baritone of the longtime comedy quartet Merry Mugs.

Jim gladly offered a quartet coaching session and the RR4 soon showed up at his suburban Kansas City home. It proved to be a mutually appreciated relationship in a group that eventually included several experienced and VERY helpful coaches. We'll get to those shortly...

Bagby discovered early on that the farmers collectively were a diamond in the rough.

One night in Walter's home around the corner from the Yoder milk barn, Jim was chatting with the head of the clan in the living room while the guys took a break. From the kitchen exploded the tag to "Olde County Down," complete with a ripper overtone. WHILE the last chord continued, Calvin sauntered in from the other room, a giant grin on his face and NOT making a sound. But the 3-voice chord and expansion continued buzzing.

Without a year-by-year rundown, the RR4 went on to win the CSD in the fall of 1976. That followed their first international appearance in the spring of '76. When they placed 21st, it presented a dilemma for the Yoders, who had never both been away from the milk barn at the same time for longer than one day. If a quartet trip took us to somewhere special – like for instance a show near Disney World -- one brother would go a day early then return after our performance(s), while the other Yoder stayed over a day to play tourist. So in San Francisco, they placed a hurried call to the substitute milker(s) to explain the need for extra help; the quartet had not considered the possibility of being called for Friday mic testing.

A similar scenario at St. Louis in 1984, where the quartet placed 11th, meaning we were onstage for the finals. You can find RR4 on YouTube singing "Yes, Indeed!" as mic testers. We vowed then always to have the Yoder farm covered for possible extra weekend milkers. St. Louis also was the first and only time all four Yoders (Walter, Calvin, Willard and Wes) sang with the HOA Chorus at international. The wives and the arm-waver were high-on-the-hog proud! After



that, Yoder Dairy Farm was covered for the possibility of both milkers being gone the entire weekend – including the Sunday convention church services we got to do and singing with Good News Quartet in its annual gospel concert. For the newbies, original GN members were all gold medalists and great Christian gentlemen: from top to bottom Jerry Fairchild of the Sidewinders, Joe Mazzone from the Regents, Dale Deiser of the Mark IV and the first double-gold BHS member, Mo Rector of the Gaynotes and Mark IV. In later years, Happiness Emporium capably took over the Good News franchise.

If an extended weekend meant a potential worker shortage at home, consider the scenario after we won the championship in 1986 at Salt Lake City, following our first medalist outing the previous year in Minneapolis. A 5th-place bronze on a beautiful red ribbon! It appeared that low-key Harriett was the only one who was not surprised to see the leap to a medal. She was always encouraging — but not one to say something like “I do believe you guys are ready to move up.” Sure enough, it was RR4, HOA and CSD bedlam in the beautiful LDS Visitors Center where the contest was held in SLC. A BHS travel representative approached us sometime after the medal ceremony

and invited us on an expenses-paid Caribbean cruise! Before we could quite absorb that news and the schedule it would involve, Bagby hesitantly responded that it might be impossible for the Yoders to be away from the farm A WHOLE WEEK!

Jim was lucky he did not get crushed under foot as the wives had their say: “Oh yes we are going!!” And sure enough, with the help of at least eight friends and relatives doing the milking and choring, we spent a memorable week entertaining, eating and sight-seeding aboard The Princess – and it’s “Roman Army” kitchen staff. In fact, we got in one more cruise before our retirement – after singing in 40 states, including Hawaii (thanks, Hank Hammer) plus London, Ontario, and London, England – and with Mitch Miller in a BHS TV special at Cincinnati.

Here’s how the quartet transitioned from the original four: After winning CSD in ’76, Rufus asked to be replaced. He had joined a more conservative Mennonite Church and was uncomfortable with the quartet “trappings” and schedule. We still saw him on occasion; their farm was just down the road from the Yoders. And he would drop by one of our Cass County rehearsals to sing an occasional tag. Rufus died of a heart attack while he and Edith were

traveling to celebrate their 50th anniversary. She survives with three daughters and a son.

The quartet asked Jim if he'd be interested in replacing Rufus. After he came off the ceiling, we immediately went to sing for then-primary coach Osmond "Oz" Newgard. He'd recently retired from his executive position at the Federal Archives in Washington and was now a happy KC resident who planned to do a lot of traveling from the center of the country. We wanted his blessing for the new combination. Willard and Jim had sung together in the 1982 CSD champion Harmony Spectrum, so we had some indication this would be a match. Did we mention that Oz had been director of the Alexandria Harmonizers – gold medalists in the making – and was the SENIOR BHS Sound judge?

Around 1980, it became evident that smoking over the years had taken a toll on Ev's voice, despite our urging that he quit. He got to the point he looked forward more to contests than shows – because of the briefer on-stage vocal requirement. This was a real personal dilemma, because he and Cal had been lifelong friends; they used to go home from church and splash with Willard in the stock tank. Eventually, Ev just said we should proceed without him. Following his '70s Vietnam tour, he had become a sought-after carpenter. He died of cancer after he left the quartet. He and Eve, who survives, had one daughter and two sons; Ev's second wife, Gaitha, already had two girls.

We were fortunate again that in the KC Chapter, a veteran tenor named Don Kahl had recently won the CSD title in the Corner Quartet. The lead was Lance Heillman, a former Interpretation Category Specialist whose coaching was influential for us and the KC chorus during the years we both were making regular trips to international.

We called Don, then a respiratory therapist at a prominent KC hospital, and the University of Kansas med grad says we only asked two questions: "How do you think you'd look in overalls?" and "Are you ready to quit smoking?" He replied, "I can do that!" and "I'm throwing my smokes out right now!!" We never again saw him in a black quartet tux or with a cigarette. Or able to maintain a relationship after three divorces. But that's another story (he has two lovely daughters). And we had no idea what a great tenor

he is! In fact, when Don later moved to the Dallas-Fort Worth area, where he remains today, he won six gold medals and a silver with the Vocal Majority.

It's a simple fact that Calvin was the vocal and soul leader of the RR4. Jim will tell you that Willard remains one of a handful of the best basses in the barbershopping world (they sang together in several foursomes over the years). But Willy says he's lost the urge to sing without his brother.

Cal was diagnosed with prostate cancer late in 2019, and then with a very aggressive case of what they told us was neuro-endocrine cancer. He kept fading before our eyes, slowly at first and then too obviously faster. The last time the quartet sang was in the living room where Calvin had been moved, and the RR4 visited together in the spring of 2020. They got through one of their favorite hymns and finally an "Amen" tag that Calvin had arranged. Calvin refused chemo and radiation, not wanting anyone to see him wasting as Mary had. Calvin died April 22, 2020.

But not before he put on a coat and tie and made a video sermon. At his service a few days later, in the largest church in Garden City, with hundreds filling the hall, the first thing we saw was Calvin's tall, slender image on a large screen over the stage. His message was brief but pure Calvin: "Don't weep for me...I am in Heaven, at peace. I hope everyone here also has met the Lord and is planning to join me." The RR4, with Wes on lead, sang.

Calvin was 73. He's survived by Wes, Gwen, twins Cindy and Mindy, second wife Michelle and adopted daughter Faith.

Willard and Velma still live "On the Farm in Old Missouri," across the road from the milk barn. They stay busy keeping up with son Daniel in Goshen, IN; daughters Emily, Meagan and Anna in the immediate area – and 11 grandchildren.

Speaking of the 400-acre dairy farm, it was honored several times over the years by the County Dairy Herd Improvement Association for total milk production and butter-fat content. And the Yoders were honored with a state conservation award for good plowing to prep pasture and drainage land.

Jim and Joann, married 63 years this month, have a daughter Kristin, 3 grandchildren and 2 great-granddaughters. Jim is a 3rd-generation

barbershopper and was a writer and editor 35 years for the Associated Press. He directed HOA for 25 years over three different stints, and now is arm-waver for the New Harmony Handful – a senior mini-chorus that does primarily daytime gigs and church services.

By a quick count, the RR4 have sung for the weddings of almost one-dozen brides, daughters and other offspring.

FINALLY, you've not heard the last of Calvin's son, Wesley, who was one of the most regular substitute milkers and chore leaders over the years. But he vowed when he was yet in junior high that he would NEVER become a dairy farmer. And he stuck to that. He and his wife, Kate, are both graduates of Hesston (KS) College. She is a high school math teacher in their hometown of Seattle, WA. Wes is an employee benefits consultant who travels a lot. They got married in 1993 and the quartet sang "The Lord's Prayer" at the wedding. Then the newlyweds spent the back half of their honeymoon at international in Calgary (Wes says Kate hasn't let him forget that).

When he was still in high school, Wes sang lead in the CSD novice champs, 4-Ever Pals. In the Evergreen District, Wes has sung lead in four district champion quartets: Reunion, Flashpoint, JetSet and Madison Park. And with a lot of air travel, he became the final RR4 tenor in 1990.

His first gig was their appearance at the Barbican Center in London. It was also his first time to sing tenor – but he has his father's versatility.

If you've made it this far, please allow a mention of the other primary RR4 coaches. Before Oz arrived in Kansas City, Alan Ives was transferred by Sears from Dallas to manage a new store in Kansas City. He was the son of Leo Ives, who sang with the 1943 BHS champion Four Harmonizers. Alan had recently won the SWD quartet title as bass of the Roustabouts. And he was a certified Society sound judge. He died too young, but he was a great influence. Around the same time, AT&T transferred Heilmann to Nashville, and we seldom saw him again as a coach. Oz died of a heart attack during a judging weekend in Green Bay. From up the road in St. Joe.

From up the road at St. Joe, we made great friends with veteran Stage Presence judge Don Ransom. He had been a major force as the Pony Expressmen won numerous CSD chorus titles. We had adapted

Al Rehkopf's bouncy arrangement of "How's Every Little Thing in Dixie" to what became our "scarecrow" routine. That featured Willy stumbling onstage in a denim jacket, both arms stuck straight out with straw protruding from each sleeve, yellow gloves and a straw hat. We paired the uptune (ok, it had nothing to do with Dixie) with Lou Perry's lovely "If the Rest of the World Don't Want You. The thought was to have a stick extending through the coat and the scarecrow arms draped over it. At the end of the uptune, we'd pull the stick out and it would become – yep, a walking stick to help him back home. Two problems: the stick hurt Willard's shoulders, especially in extended practices. And he kept whacking Jim and Cal in the head as he twisted around as if blown by the wind. Brother Ransom figured out a logical and better ending, that included us "breaking" his arms down into human position after the tag.

The smartest move the quartet ever made was to ask Sweet Adeline all-around musical and administrative expert Harriett Gall if she would be interested in coaching us. Well, she pondered, I've never coached a men's quartet. OK, but she had produced an internationally competitive SAI chorus from Kansas City. And she coached the 1979 SAI champion Hallmarks quartet. Harriett was the wife of past BHS President Bob Gall. Her strength, in retrospect, was (1) her quiet patience, (2) the ability to remind each quartet member about consistency in how each of us sang/performed and (3) her availability that made her a perfect fit -- especially for the farmers' demanding and INCONSISTENT schedule. By the time the Yoders finished each evening in the milk barn, showered and ate, it could be 8 p.m. or later. If they were driving to KC for our rehearsal, it obviously would start pretty late. And they had to get some sleep before milking at the crack of dawn the next day – seven days a week.

We scheduled as many rehearsals as possible at a Yoder home, to promote earlier starts. And Harriett made her schedule match whatever ours turned out to be almost without exception. We got in five rehearsals the week before we left for SLC, and Harriett was there for all of them, in KC or Cass County.

God Bless Harriett, all our coaches over the years, the support of our wives and families and not least, all our chorus and CSD fans.

Recognizing the founding of SPEBSQSA in Kansas City's Muehlebach Hotel



BHS plaques in the Old Lobby of downtown Kansas City's Muehlebach Hotel. The Kansas City Chapter installed these to celebrate the 1938 chance meeting of Tulsa businessmen O.C. Cash and Rupert Hall -- and later the Society's 50th anniversary.

Photos by Heart of America's Matt Bostick.



Seeking out CSD's next generation of volunteer leaders



Brett Randolph

CSD President

the operations behind the scenes, ensuring that everything runs smoothly. Volunteers bring a diverse set of skills and perspectives that enrich the experience of the CSD membership."

We are currently seeking enthusiastic and dedicated individuals to step into key leadership roles within the organization. These positions are crucial for maintaining the vibrancy and success of the CSD. There are two positions that will be open in 2027 on the Program Administrative Team, and one position on the Board of Directors. Those positions are VP of Membership, VP of Music & Performance, and Executive Vice President.

The VP of Membership plays a vital role in ensuring our organization remains welcoming and inclusive. This position involves overseeing member recruitment, engagement, and retention strategies. You will work closely with chapter representatives to ensure a positive experience for all members.

The VP of Music & Performance is responsible for elevating the musical excellence of our organization. This role involves coordinating with directors and arranging coaching sessions and workshops to enhance the skills of our performers. Your passion for music and leadership will help inspire our members to reach new heights.

In the March/April issue of The Serenade, I wrote to you on the importance of volunteers and the pivotal role they play in the success of the Central States District. Quoting from that article, "The fact of the matter is, our chapters and district could not operate without the help of volunteers. Their commitment and passion drive

As the Executive Vice President, you will be pivotal in guiding the direction of our organization. You will work alongside the President and other leaders to implement strategic goals and initiatives. This role requires strong leadership skills and a visionary mindset to drive our organization forward.

Volunteering for these leadership roles is a unique opportunity to make a significant impact on the Central States District. If you have a passion for barbershop singing and are eager to contribute your skills, we invite you to express your interest through a form that will be on the CSD website, singcsd.com. Together, we can continue to foster a thriving, harmonious environment for all members. We look forward to having new leaders join our team and drive our organization toward even greater success!

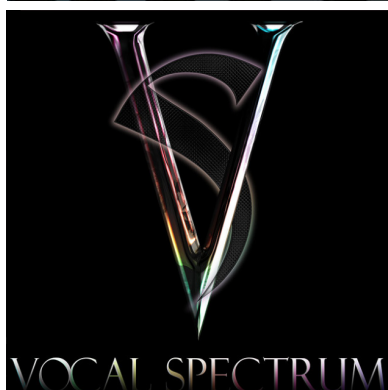
[Executive Vice President Interest Form](#)

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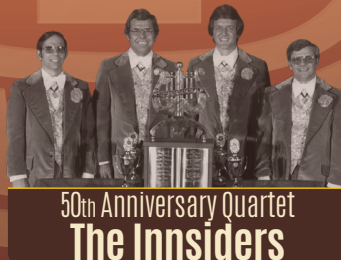


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Manhattan Chapter Joins Manhattan Municipal Band for Community Performance

MANHATTAN, Kan., June 2, 2026 — The Manhattan Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society joined the Manhattan Municipal Band today for a special community performance at the Larry Norvell Band Shell in City Park, continuing a local tradition that celebrates music, civic pride, and shared history.

The Manhattan Municipal Band has served the community since 1920 and continues to present free summer concerts at the Larry Norvell Band Shell in City Park. Under the direction of Dr. Frank Tracz, the band has remained a valued part of Manhattan's cultural life for decades. Today's performance also highlighted the longstanding connection between the barbershop chapter and the venue itself: when the band shell was built in 2004, the Manhattan barbershop chapter—then known as the Little Apple Chorus—was among the contributors who helped support the project.

For approximately 20 years, the Manhattan chapter has joined the Manhattan Municipal Band in performances at the band shell, creating a tradition

that brings together singers, instrumentalists, and audiences in one of the community's signature outdoor venues. The collaboration reflects a shared commitment to accessible live music and to preserving the rich performing arts traditions of Manhattan.

The Manhattan Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society is part of a long-standing local music tradition and has served the area since its chapter was chartered in 1977. Through performances, community events, and support for music education, the organization continues to promote barbershop harmony and encourage fellowship through song.



Spring Contest Review



Carter Combs

CSD Contest & Judging

Our Spring Convention has just wrapped, and we were thrilled to have so many excellent quartets competing. There was only one official contest, which was the International Prelims. Quartets needed a minimum average "target" score of 81 to automatically qualify for St Louis this summer. Those groups who did not reach the target, or receive one of the coveted "wildcard" invitations, but did achieve at least a 78 average, are eligible to compete in a new "Sing-In" event on Tuesday of International week. The highest scoring 2 quartets in that event will advance to the International Quarterfinals.

CSD held our quartet Prelims in both the Fall and Spring conventions for the first time. Our prior Int'l Semifinalist quartet Fleet Street (Matt Suellentrop, Aaron Zart, Keegan Eich, Michael Bass) qualified last fall. This spring, we had no additional qualifiers. Fountain City Four (Brayden Heath, Arlen Burroughs, Dan Rasmussen, Jon Kready) scored well enough that they might receive a Wildcard invitation, as did Fully Vetted (Austin Veteto, Chris Pingel, Stephen Vandenberg, Adam Veteto) last fall. And Rubber Ducky fans will be pleased to learn that Tapestry (Jeff Arians, Austin Siefers, Jonathan Fortino, Nate Green) is also eligible for the Sing-In, if they so choose, joining last fall's Ephraim Steven (Steve Azevedo, Chaz McPeck, Dave Carlisle, Stephen Day).

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Out-of-district quartet Jukebox (Terry Blessing, Ian Wolfe, Josh Umhoefer, Jeremy Conover) had already been designated as LOL district representative, and joined us for some additional stage-time and feedback from our judges.

In addition to Prelims, eight quartets signed up to "compete" for Score & Feedback Only. This allowed them to get coaching from our fine panel of judges, in addition to an unpublished score. Two notable quartets who chose that option were composed entirely of students: The Chordettes, from Olathe Northwest High School, and Harmony Dawgs, from Augusta High School. Both groups thrilled our audience with their delightful performances. With talent like this coming up, our hobby is in excellent hand... er... voices!

Our Fall convention is October 9-10 in Lawrence, where we will hold all of our District Contests, in addition to Int'l Prelims. I hope to see everyone there!

Fall	
<u>Quartet</u>	<u>Chorus</u>
<u>Prelims</u>	
Quartet Int'l Prelim - [2]	Chorus Int'l Prelim
Seniors Quartet Int'l Prelim	Seniors Chorus Int'l Prelim
<u>District Contests</u>	
District Quartet - [2]	District Chorus
Novice Quartet	District Seniors Chorus
SuperNovice Quartet	Plateau IV Chorus
Seniors Quartet	Plateau III Chorus
SuperSeniors Quartet	Plateau II Chorus
Youth Quartet	Plateau I Chorus
	VLQ - Very Large Quartet

Don't Let the Deadline Slip: A Compliance Reminder for Treasurers



Jeff Arians

CSD Treasurer

As a treasurer, you carry the vital responsibility of safeguarding your organization's tax-exempt status. With the primary filing season in full swing, now is the time to ensure your books are closed and your **Form 990-series** return is ready for submission.

The Critical Deadline: May 15, 2026

For organizations operating on a

standard calendar year (ending December 31), the federal filing deadline is **May 15, 2026**.

While this date is standard for most, remember that the IRS requires the return by the 15th day of the 5th month following the close of your fiscal year. If you find your team needs more time to compile financial data or conduct a board review, you can secure an automatic six-month extension (until November 16, 2026) by filing **Form 8868** on or before the initial May 15 deadline.

Which Form Do You Need?

Filing requirements generally depend on your organization's financial threshold:

- **Form 990-N (e-Postcard):** For small organizations with gross receipts normally less than \$50,000.
- **Form 990-EZ:** For organizations with gross receipts less than \$200,000 and total assets less than \$500,000.
- **Form 990:** For larger organizations that exceed the above thresholds.

The Cost of Noncompliance

Missing the deadline without a valid extension can lead to steep financial and operational consequences that directly impact your mission:

- **Daily Penalties:** For organizations with gross receipts under \$1.2 million, the IRS imposes a penalty of **\$20 per day** (\$25 per day according to some recent adjustments for inflation) for each day the return is late. This can climb to a maximum of **\$12,000** or 5% of gross receipts.
- **Larger Organization Fines:** If your gross receipts exceed \$1.2 million, the penalty jumps to **\$120–\$130 per day**, capping at **\$60,000**.
- **Automatic Revocation:** This is the ultimate "death penalty" for a nonprofit. If an organization fails to file for **three consecutive years**, the IRS automatically revokes its tax-exempt status. Once revoked, the organization becomes a taxable entity, and donors can no longer claim tax deductions for their contributions.

Proactive Steps for Treasurers

1. **Verify electronic filing credentials.** Most 990 forms must now be filed electronically.
2. **Review your gross receipts** to ensure you are filing the correct version of the form.
3. **File an extension early** if there is any doubt about meeting the May deadline.

Maintaining compliance isn't just about avoiding fines; it's about maintaining the trust of your donors and the community you serve. Don't wait until the second week of May to start the process!

Also, don't forget to have your annual financial review done by an independent person! Once completed, make sure that you upload the form to the compliance section of your chapter's member center.

As always, if you need any assistance or have any questions regarding your chapter's non-profit tax return, don't hesitate to reach out!

Fall Convention returning to Lawrence, Kan. in October



Doug Brott

CSD Director of Events

an I on the CSD Website for information and registration

Don't miss the BHS International Convention in St Louis the week of July 4. Be sure to cheer on the CSD Quartets and Choruses that will be competing. If you can't be there in person, look for the live stream options on the BHS Website.

The 2026 Fall Convention is next up in October. Once again in Lawrence KS. Keep

links that will go up shortly after the International Convention in St. Louis.

In the meantime we have a New CSD Event, the South Dakota Festival. It will be held Saturday, August 1, 2026, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. at the Bethel Christian Fellowship in Viborg, SD. The day will include chorus coaching by Matt Webber, tag singing, and learning a song or two as a mass sing. Contact Cliff Huot for more details at southdakotavp@singcsd.com.

A promotional image for the Flint Hills Four quartet. Four men in dark suits and yellow and blue striped ties are singing enthusiastically in a grassy field at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and purple. In the background, there are rolling hills. A banner across the bottom of the image contains contact information. Above the men, the text 'www.flinthillsfourqt.com' is visible, followed by 'FLINT HILLS FOUR' in large, stylized letters. A graphic of a treble clef and musical notes is also present.

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CSD Member Spotlight



Jeff Arians

I am a third-generation barbershopper, as my father (Harold) and his father (Harley) were both bitten by the barbershop bug. That being said, I have been around barbershop harmony my whole life, whether that be going to conventions to watch my dad's quartet (Journeymen) compete, singing with my home chapter

(River City Chorus), or singing with one of my quartets (River City Reverb, RCQ, Minor Details, or Tapestry). I have officially been a member of the BHS for 15 years, but like I just said, I have really been addicted to harmony for all 33 years of my life.

I have been blessed to cross the international stage with my collegiate quartet (Minor Details) and in the "big boy" contest with my current quartet, Tapestry. These experiences were obviously surreal, but the best part of quartetting for me is sharing our



wonderful hobby with people across the world. I have been lucky enough to sing on countless chapter shows as a guest quartet, Youth in Harmony events (which are my favorite, as you cannot beat seeing the joy on a student's face when they hear/sing barbershop for the first time), harmony brigades, and other gigs such as the Bill Riley Talent Show, county fairs, and church sing-outs.

Like every barbershopper, I want to see our hobby succeed now, and in the future. With that in mind, I decided to start serving on the Central States District board in 2022 as the Iowa Vice-President. This was an awesome experience for me, as it really allowed me to connect with the other chapters in our wonderful state and get to know them and their members. I only served as the Iowa Vice-President for one term (2 years), as I was then elected as the Treasurer of the CSD in 2024, which is my current role in the district. Being the Treasurer has had its own challenges, as it has opened my eyes to the financial struggles that the CSD has had since returning from the pandemic, but it



has also allowed me to use my professional experience to help make financial decisions to hopefully better our books. The board has made some difficult decisions on the financial side this past year, but I am excited that we are being proactive instead of reactive. I have always been an optimistic person, but I do believe that the changes we have made will lead the CSD to a brighter financial future.

As I mentioned above, being the Treasurer of the CSD really allows me to use my professional expertise for the hobby that I love. When I am not singing, you will likely find me doing bookkeeping, payroll, or income taxes, as I am a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and the owner of Quality Accounting Services in Waterloo, IA. As you can imagine, being the owner of an accounting firm makes my spring crazy busy with income taxes, chapter shows, and the spring convention, but I wouldn't have it any other way. There are a bunch of 90 hour weeks, but there is always a light at the end of the tunnel, which is having the opportunity to ring some chords with my family and friends.

When I'm not working or singing, you will likely find me on the golf course or the lake with my beautiful wife, Hanna. We have been married for five and a half years and are expecting our first child this July! Everyone in our house, even our sweet pup, Bogey, is counting down the days until we get to meet our little fourth-generation barbershopper! If I'm lucky enough, I will be able to sing in a quartet with him someday, just as I was able to sing with my father in RCQ. I could win the district contest, an international medal, heck, even the gold medal, and it still wouldn't compete with the feeling that I had singing with my dad on the contest stage. We might have gotten disqualified for singing Puff the Magic Dragon in the Top 10, but it was still an awesome ride (love you, dad)!



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