

THE Sunburst



TRIENNIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SUNSHINE DISTRICT BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

SUNbelievable!



Sunshine City Chorus
Sunshine District Chorus Champions
— Spring Convention, 2025 —



*Tony DeRosa Receives the Joe Liles
Lifetime Achievement Award*
— International, 2025 —

Radiant
2025 BHS NextGen 1st Place
— International, 2025 —



**Tribute
Non-Stop
OnPoint**
*Qualify for
International 2026*
— Spring Convention, 2025 —



and so much more inside!

SUNSHINEDISTRICT.ORG

President's Message



David Mills
Sunshine District President
president@sunshinedistrict.org

What an incredible weekend we had at our recent Spring Convention in beautiful St. Augustine! I want to begin with a heartfelt **thank you** to all the volunteers who made this convention such a success. Your behind-the-scenes work does not go unnoticed, and it made the entire event run smoothly and joyfully.

To everyone who attended—whether you were competing, cheering in the audience, or catching up with old friends—thank you for being there. Your presence is what brings this community to life. And of course, **congratulations to all the amazing competitors**, both quartets and choruses. Your performances were inspiring and a great reminder of the talent and dedication that thrives in our district.

Looking ahead, mark your calendars for our **Fall Convention, October 16–19!** Whether you're planning to compete or just want to come and soak up the harmonies, **we want you there.** The event is always better when you're part of it—and frankly, we'll miss you if you're not!

I also want to take a moment to say **thank you to everyone who has donated to the Sunshine District Endowment.** We are so close to reaching the \$25,000 threshold that will allow us to begin making distributions to support our Youth programs. If we can get over the top this summer, those programs can start benefiting as early as 2026. So please, if you've been thinking about contributing, now is the time! Please reach out to me or **Chris Rodgers**, our Director of Finance, and we'll help you make it happen.

And don't forget: **LDJ (Labor Day Jamboree) is just around the corner!**

(continued on next page)





Aug 29th–Sept 2nd Orlando/Celebration

Make your plans now to join us for a weekend packed with phenomenal music and unforgettable memories. This year's featured quartets include:

- ♪ **Three and a Half Men:** 2024 BHS Quartet Champions
- ♪ **The Newfangled Four:** 2024 BHS Medalists
- ♪ **Brouhaha:** 2023 WBQA Quartet Champions
- ♪ **Sunday Night Social:** 2024 & 2025 BHS Finalists
- ♪ **Radiant:** 2025 BHS NextGen Quartet Champions
- ♪ ...and more!

Details and tickets are available at www.sunshinedistrict.org/ldj — we can't wait to see you there.

Thank you for all you do to keep our Sunshine family strong and singing. Let's keep the harmony going!



Executive Vice President's Message

Rod Sgrignoli
Sunshine District Executive Vice President
evp@sunshinedistrict.org

Hello Sunshine!!

I hope this finds all of you enjoying the summer and hopefully finding time to ring a few chords along the way!

You'll find some stories about our **Spring Convention** and the fabulous youth event that we sponsored earlier this summer in Tampa! Thanks to the many folks such as **Steve Cragg**, **Tony DeRosa**, **Debbie Cleveland**, quartets **Suite Life!** and **Duly Noted**, and *The Heralds Of Harmony* and *The Toast Of Tampa* for making the weekend a wonderful barbershop experience for all of our youth!

If you've not already read David's article or heard about the future opportunity, we are getting very close to reaching the minimum threshold on a youth endowment fund with Harmony Foundation that can then provide funding on an ongoing annual basis to help keep our youth camps going. We need your help on this as much as ever since some of our sources for grant money have dried up in recent years. We want to continue to run our Harmony Explosion camps so if you're in a position to support this effort, you can find out more from either **David Mills** or **Chris Rodgers**, our Director of Finance, on how and where to give. We want to also thank *The Heralds Of Harmony* and SAI Region 9 who so generously donate both their time and charitable donations to help finance our annual Harmony Explosion events – thank you!

We had a great **Spring Convention** though somewhat lightly attended. We love to see you all so hoping to see more of you at the **Fall Convention** as well as the upcoming **Labor Day Jamboree!**

Finally, I have two questions to pose – feel free to share thoughts with me at evp@sunshinedistrict.org. The two things on my mind are:

1) How do we continue to make our conventions exciting for you? We want these to be so enjoyable – filled with friends, songs and educational opportunities – that you'll keep joining us for years to come. We get lots of feedback that our events are well run and lots of fun – that being said, we know we can always find ways to make them even better so if you have ideas that could be the difference between your joining us for a weekend or just staying home, we'd love to hear them!

2) How are things going in your chapter? The Sunshine District Board is hoping to reach out to all of our chapters in the next year to see how things are going and either offer district services or seek help from Harmony Hall to help enrich your chapter experience. If you have items you want to share or if there are any immediate areas where we can help, please email those ideas and requests to either me or one of the other team members on the Sunshine District Board and let us know how we can help.

Thanks for all you do to make Barbershop in Florida a world-class experience!!

See all y'all at **Labor Day Jamboree!**
Rod Sgrignoli, SUN EVP



Advice on Obtaining Grants for Chapters

Chris Rodgers
Director of Finance

harmonyfoundation@sunshinedistrict.org

Researching and finding grants can be very time consuming. Most grants are project based, so you will need to decide what project you need to be funded (such as Christmas shows, youth camps, or chapter quartet outreach to shut-ins or elderly homes). Once you find one that appeals to you and sounds like a good fit for your project, you need to see what the requirements are from your organization. Also see what the reporting requirements are as well as understand how you will receive the money: Lump sum in the beginning? Quarterly installments? Reimbursement by receipts? – etc. Then you can write the proposal and submit according to the grant sources requirements. You may also need to present the grant request to a panel of judges, to answer any questions or clarify anything you put in the proposal.

You should also understand the whole timeline of the grant application process that you are interested in. For example, the grantor may have a July to June fiscal year. They may open applications in August, close submissions in October, decide in November, and then let

you know by December. But it may not be paid out until the following July 1st (or whatever schedule starting in July). Most often, it can be a long process to get a grant – this is nothing like applying for a bank loan and having money a few weeks later.

Hiring a grant writer can help you decide if a grant is a good fit, tell you the likelihood of getting that grant and explain the process for that grant. They can also help to word your proposal to achieve the best possible chance of qualifying and edging out other proposals. Some of these grant writers are expensive, and some are cheap... see if you can find someone that only gets paid (flat fee) if your gets approved (for example: \$500 for securing a \$4000 grant). You don't want to lose money while trying to find money.

We have now added a [new section](#) on our Sunshine District website for Finance-related information. There you can read my complete article: *Information on Grants for Sunshine District Chapters*. Stay tuned as I will be adding some additional information on funding strategies – after all, grants are only one part of funding a chapter.



Congratulations Brian Wunderlin

2024 Sunshine District Barbershopper of the Year



The Sunshine District Barbershopper Of The Year (BOTY) award is our most coveted annual award because it's related to all those ingredients that go to make up the complete Barbershopper during a calendar year. The candidates are not necessarily the same as Chapter Barbershopper Of The Year winners. This fact should be kept in mind whenever chapters prepare to submit the names of one or more candidates. The award is made annually at our Spring Convention and is overseen by a District committee comprised of the last three award recipients.

Past BOTY Recipients

2023 - Steve Cragg, Tampa	2005 - Daniel Proctor*, First Coast Metro	1988 - Bob Ross*, Winter Park	1972 - Barry Porter, Polk County
2022 - Paul Agnew, Frank Thorne	2004 - Dan Brinkmann, Melbourne	1987 - Roger Ross, Winter Park	1971 - Brett White*, Palm Beach County
2019 - Chuck Steiner, Tampa	2003 - Bill Bernard*, Central Florida	1986 - Dick Shaw, Polk County	1970 - Bill Wood*, Orlando
2018 - Byron Poore, Tallahassee	2002 - Bill Billings, Tampa	1985 - Bob Romaine*, Pensacola	1969 - Jack Baker*, St. Petersburg
2017 - Tony De Rosa, Tampa	2001 - Stephen Barrett*, St. Petersburg	1984 - Tim Hanrahan*, Greater Canaveral	1968 - Cline Clary*, Polk County
2016 - Sean Stork, Daytona Beach & Winter Park	2000 - Shannon Elswick, Clermont	1983 - Al Woodard, Palm Beach County	1967 - Dick Ott*, Sarasota
2015 - Roger Smeds, Martin - St. Lucie & Sunrise	1999 - Jim Breedon, First Coast Metro	1982 - Jim Tobin*, Sarasota	1966 - Chuck Williams*, Clearwater
2014 - Dave Kannberg, Palm Beach County & Sunrise	1998 - Ed Williamson*, First Coast Metro	1981 - Phil Lundeen*, Sarasota & Venice	1965 - Hank Vomacka*, Sarasota
2013 - Tony Fortune - Daytona Beach	1997 - Steve Aliapulios*, Palm Beach County	1980 - Mike McGarry, St. Petersburg	1964 - Keith Korneisel*, St. Petersburg
2012 - Nick Schwob, Tampa	1996 - Larry Swan*, Sarasota	1979 - Grover Baker*, Miami	1963 - Jesse Dean*, Orlando
2011 - Chad Bennett, Winter Park	1995 - Gene Cokeroff*, Miami	1978 - Stew Nichols*, Greater Canaveral	1962 - Rik Ogden*, Miami
2010 - Alex Rubin, Ft. Lauderdale	1994 - Al Copp*, Polk County	1977 - Fred Anton*, Miami	1961 - Marshall Walsh*, Jacksonville
2009 - Bart Van de Mark, Martin/St. Lucie	1993 - Clair Chellberg*, Ft. Walton Beach	1976 - Bert Warshaw*, Miami	1960 - Joe Griffith*, St. Petersburg
2008 - Keith Hopkins, Winter Park	1992 - Bill Fowler*, Tampa	1975 - Bud Harvey*, Martin County	1959 - Bob Boemler*, Miami
2007 - Mark Schlinkert, Tampa	1991 - Joe Breedon*, Ft. Walton Beach	1974 - Bill Stahl*, Polk County	1958 - Fred Breedon*, Jacksonville
2006 - Ken Carter, Central Florida	1990 - Frank Caldarazzo*, Orlando	1973 - Burt Szabo*, Orlando	
	1989 - Jim Simon, Tampa		* deceased



Message from the Director of Events

Chuck Steiner

Sunshine District Director of Events

events@sunshinedistrict.org

Calendars- Sunshine District Events around the corner!

Folks, we've got a heckuva lineup for you as we end summer and round the corner into "fall"!

♪ **SUN Labor Day Jamboree:** Our signature event, where fellowship meets fun and tags last 'til sunrise. This is the heartbeat of Sunshine District harmony. Many quartets were formed here! And dissolved here. But... the most celebrated quartets- current and past medalists, top 10's, crowd faves, and SUN royalty are gonna be at LDJ. Don't miss it!



**Aug 29th-Sept 2nd
Orlando/Celebration**

<https://www.sunshinedistrict.org/ldj/>

♪ **SUN Fall Convention – October 17th & 18th 2025:** We return to the **St. Augustine World Golf Renaissance Resort** for a weekend of music and memories. *Sales will begin shortly after LDJ concludes.*

www.sunshinedistrict.org

♪ **Mark Your Calendars:** Going forward, our Fall and Spring Conventions will always land on the same weekends in October (3rd weekend), and May (first weekend) ...*for the next three (3) years.* Plan ahead, because these weekends belong to Sunshine.

☀️ Carrying the SUN Banner High – Denver 2025 & What's Next for Sunshine

🚩 The Sunshine Spirit

Our SUN chorus representative and SUN quartets all proudly carried the SUN banner with excellence and that unmistakable Sunshine Spirit! These moments remind us why we do what we do: the music, the friendships, the harmony, and the joy of standing shoulder to shoulder in song- **and winning.** Yeah, we like to win.

And our future is on FIRE!

🎵 HD Chorus – Sunshine Pride in the Chorus Contest:

HD Chorus delivered a heartfelt performance that earned them *19th place* in the International Chorus Contest. Their music showed the world the artistry and camaraderie that define our District. A top-20 finish with only a handful of rehearsals with the full chorus? All in Denver? We'll take it!

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

Fall 2025: October 17-19

Spring 2026: May 1-3

Fall 2026: October 16-18

Spring 2027: April 30 – May 2

Fall 2027: October 15-17

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🎵 International Quartet Contest – Sunshine Quartets on the World Stage

The Sunshine District was powerfully represented by three quartets in the **International Quartet Quarter Finals**, each singing their hearts out and proudly **carrying the SUN banner**:

- ♪ “**Tribute**”: Tenor **Brian Lindvall**, Lead **Ryan Killeen**, Baritone **Marshall Crawl**, Bass **Sam Rinkenbaugh** — 1968 points (~82.0%), placing 27th.
- ♪ “**Non Stop**”: Tenor **Donell Torres**, Lead **Johnny Bugarin**, Baritone **Kealan Rivera**, Bass **Michael Adams** — 1949 points (~81.2%), placing 33rd.
- ♪ “**On Point**”: Tenor **Taylor Despars**, Lead **Daniel Pesante**, Baritone **Timothy Keatley**, Bass **Alexander Burney** — 1913 points (~79.7%), placing 48th.

These quartets – *ALL who were in their very first International Open Contest*, and one who just formed *within the last half year(!)* – left everything on the stage, earning applause and admiration from audiences and judges alike. And they left us all relieved that the future of SUN quartetting looks like a continuation of our winning legacy!

We’d have it no other way.

🌟 Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contest Sunshine Takes 1st AND 2nd

Our youth quartets didn’t just compete—they DOMINATED!

The **Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contest** became a showcase for Sunshine excellence, with our young singers sweeping the top two spots:

🥇 **Radiant** (SUN) Tenor **Abbie Owens**, Lead **Hannah Paschal**, Baritone **Emma Paschal**, Bass **Katie Vincent** took home 1st place, scoring 1472 points (~81.8%), bringing home the gold medal.

🥈 **Suite Life** (SUN) — Tenor **Lex Goity**, Lead **Cody Mathewson**, Baritone **Tripp Carter**, Bass **Zach Gould** finished in 2nd place, with 1462 points (~81.3%), capturing the silver medal.

Special shout to Trilogy who made their international stage debut in the Next Gen Contest this year and finished 15th!

A **1–2 Sunshine finish** on the biggest youth barbershop stage—proof that our future isn’t just bright, it’s blazing 🔥!

🌱 Where They Began – A Friendly Reminder

These incredible young singers didn’t just appear fully formed—they started somewhere. For many, that journey began at **Harmony Explosion Camp** or a **district youth workshop**, where they caught the barbershop bug and never let it go.

Supporting our youth programs is supporting the future of our art form. Let’s keep giving them the tools, experiences, and encouragement they need to keep **carrying the SUN banner** higher. *Excellence is our DEFAULT, not an “era.”*

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Celebrating Tony De Rosa



A special moment from Denver: **Tony De Rosa** received the prestigious **2025 Joe Liles Lifetime Achievement Award**, The Society's highest honor for excellence in directing! Tony stands as the only person who has earned FIVE gold medals as a quartet singer, plus decades of leadership as a director, mentor, and eventually, a *therapist*.

Tony's influence has shaped generations of barbershoppers, and his legacy has been spun into the fabric of the Sunshine District. His career with BHS quartets **Keepsake**, **Platinum**, **MaxQ**, **Main Street**, **Three and a Half Men**, and as Musical Director of the **Dapper Daps** at Disney Worldwide, **Voices of Liberty** at Epcot, *The Toast of Tampa* (SAI), and of course, *The Heralds of Harmony*– has inspired and driven countless singers *globally*.

Tony– your legacy is Sunshine incarnate. *Congratulations.* 🌞❤️



Message from the Director of Music and Education

Jack Klotzbach

Sunshine District Director of Music and Education

education@sunshinedistrict.org

Hello Sunshine District!

Well, it has been a pleasure to serve the district as the Director of Music & Education (VP Education) for the last 7 years. I will be staying on through this next year, but I am seeking a replacement to work with me through this next year and then assume the role in full in 2027. This role has grown in the last year with combining of the Music VP and Education VP positions into one Directorship. The Board is looking for someone who would like to help mold the music support and education in the District into the future. The position's effort is not over taxing but does require attention to detail and understanding barbershop district and chapter structures, quartet support, barbershop music sources, coaching and arrangers. If you have a desire to support your barbershop friends in an administrative role, please contact me or our district president, David Mills.

Coaching Guild

A project I would like to complete by the end of next year is the revamping of the coaching

guild which is basically the district's listing of available coaches for choruses, quartets or chapters. The current list has not been updated in years. I am requesting all district members who are qualified to coach, (judges – current and past), international qualified quartet members, international qualified chorus directors, district board members (current and past), music educators, and harmony university trained coaches. Please contact me to understand the requirements.

LEADAC

Leadership Academy will be via zoom meeting for the 2026-chapter boards and other support training. The sessions will be in spring of 2026 and will probably include 3 districts. Please be ready to register. More information on classes and instructors to come.

Other Information

If there is any chapter or chorus or quartet that would like any music or administrative assistance, please contact me, I will be happy to assist you.





Message from SUN Communications

Jason Dearing

Sunshine District Director of Communications

communications@sunshinedistrict.org

Way to go, Radiant and Suite Life, at the NextGen contest!

The Sunshine District is proud to be the home of so many International contest medal winners. That comes from unbelievable amounts of collective work and individual drive, paired with exceptional coaches and quartet developers within our district. This is not just a recent phenomenon.

Florida is rich with nearly a century of barbershop history, and SUN itself for nearly 70 years. While the SUN Website has lists of basic historic events, we'd love to get your stories around some of those statistics.

If you've got a story or an old photo you'd like to tell about the Sunshine District or some of our barbershoppers over the decades, please share it with me at communications@SunshineDistrict.org. If you're the kind of person who likes listening to or reading these sorts of stories and seeing these sorts of pictures, email me as well!

New Merch Interest Form

The Sunshine District would like to set up an online storefront where you can order branded items and have them shipped to your home or picked up at conventions.



So, WHAT would you like to buy with our beautiful logo on it? Please let us know using [this survey form](https://forms.gle/FaM53zcUTXczsMNs6).

<https://forms.gle/FaM53zcUTXczsMNs6>

New Sunburst schedule

Starting with this issue, we will be publishing The Sunburst on a triannual basis. That's 3-times-a-year, not every three years! This more closely aligns with the Spring-Summer-Fall event schedule the district maintains.

- ♪ March, to celebrate chapter Christmas and Valentines events, advertise Spring/Summer shows, get updates from new District officers, and share plans for the year.
- ♪ Early August, to celebrate Spring convention, International Convention, HX, and advertise upcoming events like LDJ, Fall convention
- ♪ November, to celebrate Fall convention, advertise chapter and other Christmas events, LeadAc, and give end-of-year reports

As always, we would love to hear about your chapter events and goings-on at **any** time of year, but please do consider sending us at least a few lines and a picture about what your chapter is up to for the March and November issues. Ads for your chapter shows are reasonably-priced as well!



Quartet & Chapter Happenings

Sunshine District Champs!

The Sunshine City Chorus, based in St. Petersburg, is the District's newest chorus. With just 11 on stage, it was thrilling to become District champions, and seeing our name on the trophy still doesn't seem real. Especially with some of the names that are already on there.

Directed by **Lance Lubin**, the emphasis is on singing well while having a whole lot of fun. Our rehearsals are 2 parts singing to 1 part laughing. But apparently, a happy chorus sings well.

We are grateful to **Debbie Cleveland** who helped us prepare and are very appreciative of the love that was shown to us at the convention.

We meet Tuesday nights at 7 p.m. at Allendale Methodist Church, 3803 Haines Rd In St. Petersburg; and like any chorus, would be thrilled to have you visit us. *For more information, call Lance at 727-410-5696.*



Quartet & Chapter Happenings

Sarasota Chorus of the Keys

by Roger Murphy

Sarasota Chorus of the Keys Awards College Scholarships to Local High School Seniors

The *Sarasota Chorus of the Keys* recently awarded Sheridan E. Brown Memorial Scholarships for 2025 to three (3) high school seniors who have demonstrated outstanding musical achievement and will pursue a degree that includes a music curriculum. Chorus President **George McColgan** announced that college scholarships totally over \$6000 have been awarded to **Gabriel Dos Santos** of Venice High School (Florida State University), **Harrison May** of Venice High School (University of Florida), and **Jaden Zomir** of Sarasota Virtual High School (Florida Polytechnic University).

The *Sarasota Chorus of the Keys*, a chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society, is celebrating its 76th anniversary in 2025 and has been entertaining Suncoast area residents with four-part a cappella harmony since 1949. The Chorus has been awarding college scholarships to deserving students for more than twenty-five years. More information about the Chorus is available at: www.chorusofthekeys.org.



Harrison May and parents accept the Sheridan E. Brown Memorial Scholarship presented by the Sarasota Chorus of the Keys



Gabriel Dos Santos and mother accept the Sheridan E. Brown Memorial Scholarship presented by the Sarasota Chorus of the Keys



Jaden Zomir and mother accept the Sheridan E. Brown Memorial Scholarship presented by the Sarasota Chorus of the Keys



Quartet & Chapter Happenings

Sarasota Chorus of the Keys Sponsors Local Students to Attend Harmony Explosion

by Guy Haas, www.chorusofthekeys.org

Sarasota Chorus of the Keys sponsored several local High School students to attend the **Harmony Explosion Camp** of the Sunshine District of the Barbershop Harmony Society.

The event was held June 20-22, at USF in Tampa in their amazing School of Music facility!

Since 1999 the Sunshine District of the Barbershop Harmony Society has sponsored a 3-day Summer Music Camp for Florida high school students and their Music Educators. This is not just any other camp!

Attendees experience the very best of a Capella singing in the barbershop style taught by amazing clinicians **Tony DeRosa** and **Debbie Cleveland**! Our talented teaching quartets this year: **Suite Life!** and **Duly Noted!**



Harmony Explosion camp is a great way for students to gain voice part independence, develop ear-training skills, learn about and experience singing a purely American musical art form while singing in concert with their peers!

Music educators will gain solid, usable teaching ideas and discover ways to generate excitement and attract singers to their program(s).



Scholarships were awarded to:

SARASOTA HIGH SCHOOL:
Carter Grim
River Rogers
Kevin Revuelta-Rodriguez
Don Klineschmidt
Stephanie Zarife
Elise McEwen-Haworth
Macy McHugh
Ally Harrell

PINE VIEW HIGH SCHOOL:
Zoe Harrell
Thomas Harrell



Chapter Eternal

SOBO

By: Ken Moyer



Mike Sobolewski

Let me tell you a story about a man that I and many of you knew, and had the pleasure to be acquainted with. Now truth be told, not everyone was a big fan, but there was no denying he was dedicated and passionate about those things that were important to him. His alma mater Notre Dame, his Southeast Hold'em Poker playing, Barbershop and his family. Especially his wife, Jan. Certainly not in that order.

Mike Sobolewski was born in Wilmington, Delaware on May 13th, 1943. He was brought up with a Catholic background for most of his early years. He went to Notre Dame for his college education and was very devoted to it. If you ever wanted to start a conversation with Sobo, all you had to do was mention Notre Dame and off he'd go. Although he had been singing in high school, his passion for it grew exponentially when he joined the Notre Dame glee club. On one of the anniversaries of the glee club he joined 500 of the past and present members in a big concert celebration. They were dressed in full tails. If you ever wanted to find Mike on a Saturday afternoon during football season, just find where the Notre Dame fan club was watching a game and you could be sure to find him.

After graduating from Notre Dame, Mike got a job in Detroit, later moving to Philadelphia to work for the Budd Company.

Here was an interesting fact I found out...Mike had a passion for bowling, and almost turned pro! Fortunately for us, Mike discovered Barbershop in the late 70's and decided that Barbershop was it for him. He was hooked. After a few years in the Men's organization Mike found himself directing a Sweet Adelines chorus in Cumberland County, New Jersey. Now the chorus was a modestly talented chorus, but due to its size probably wasn't going to win a contest. But with Mike at the helm, they were certainly going to have fun and make people remember them whatever they did. And fun they had! At one contest the ladies were all green moon women and Mike was an astronaut. At his shock of seeing all these moon women, Mike started to fall back, like he was going to pass out. Now at about this time, ET the movie had just come out. One of the ladies had a light at the end of her finger. She pointed it at Mike, the pitch blew, and as if to be able to levitate him, pulled him back to the position to direct the chorus. Well, the crowd loved it! Mike came up with all kinds of crazy ideas for a contest package, but that was just Mike.

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Some years later Mike found himself directing a men's chorus in Lancaster, Pa. Part of the large Mid Atlantic district, where he took them to a fourth place finish at one district contest.

Then, in 1981, Mike met a pretty young Sweet Adeline by the name of Jan at the University of Maryland, Baltimore campus at a Sweet Adeline summer workshop. Though at this point he didn't even know her name- he did some detective work and got her name and phone number. That night he called her for a date, and that was the start of a long and cherished relationship.

In 1981, Mike convinced her to come to the International convention in Detroit for their first date. A year later they went on a PRE-marriage honeymoon to the International convention in Pittsburgh. Soon to follow was the both of them saying "I Do", starting a marriage that would last for 43 years.

In 1989 they moved from Newark Delaware to Miami for a transfer in Mike's job. There he started to direct the "Miamians". Mike also got very involved behind the scenes in local contests, LDJ with Steve Barrett, and at International - helping Hal and Mary-Jo Purdy host the "Purdy Corral". Mike's involvement offered him the opportunity to get to meet and rub elbows with all the heavy hitters and big names in Barbershopping.

In 1992, Miami was introduced to an unwelcome guest. His name.... Andrew. This storm would leave thousands of people without electricity, belongings, and for many, their homes and everything they owned. Mike and Jan were among them. It was amazing and heart-warming to see the Barbershopping community pull together to help the barbershoppers of the area rebuild. Two years after the Insurance moratorium was lifted, Mike's commercial insurance employer informed him and all his fellow associates that they would be closing down their operation in Florida and that he and many others would be out of a job.

Fortunately for Mike, Jan and the local barbershop community, he soon got a call from a headhunter in Jacksonville offering Mike a job that he couldn't pass up. Unfortunately for Jan that would end up with her staying in Miami for another year while she tried to sell their home.

Mike, being the barbershopper he was, didn't take long before joining the "Big Orange Chorus" and becoming a big part of it. The director at the time was another beloved member of the Sunshine District and Internationally known icon we unfortunately lost, by the name of Chuck Griffith.

During the years that followed, as often happens, there was a change in directorship at the "Big O". With the disagreements that ensued, the BigO split into two, marking the beginning of another chorus in Jacksonville called "The First Coast Metropolitans." In large part, Mike's influence in the new chorus helped them build a competitive chorus and under the direction of Mike McGee in 2006, the "Mets" went on to finish 17th at international. Unfortunately for the Mets, that would be their last hurrah. In 2008, with diminishing membership and the resurgence of the BigO, the Mets would disband and many, like Mike, came back to the BigO.

During that time, Mike had teamed up with the Jacksonville Jaguars and the Veterans Memorial Arena to operate concession stands at their venues which gave both entities a very large influx of funding. It helped the BigO secure the directorship of Tony DeRosa. (And on a side note, it gave me the big pleasure for many



Mike and Jan Sobolewski

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years to sing with and next to last year's gold medalist winning tenor, whom most of us referred to at-the-time as "Little Joe." But I digress...)

It was around this time that I first met Mike. His personality was as large as his frame. I knew nothing of the man except some of the chatter between members. I didn't always agree with him, but the more I found out about him, the more I respected him. He became a friend and mentor, but in all honesty, as too often happens, I've found out so much more writing this article. Much of which I wish I would have learned while he was still with us.

As time went on, it became harder and harder for Mike to get enough people to staff the venues. Soon it was necessary to abandon his efforts and as you can imagine, the funding went as well. With the loss of funding and the resurgence of the "Heralds Of Harmony", Tony left and the BigO was again looking for directorship. A BIG friend and long time member, George Gipp, took over on a temporary basis. While I don't have the facts to back it up, I'm sure Mike had some influence to make that happen. :)

Mike and Terry Ezell, the current president of the BigO at that time, went on a search for a new director which came in the form of Jay Giallombardo who had just moved to Jacksonville. In 2018 Jay, George and Mike took the chorus to the international competition in Orlando. Soon after that Covid hit and eventually many members decided to leave. Jay stepped aside as Director.

Mike and Jason Dearing managed to keep the BigO solvent (although just barely) with 8 or 10 members showing up at rehearsals. Again seeking directorship, the BigO tagged a member of the Chorus, Daniel Pesante, a recent graduate of the music program at Jacksonville University, to become the new director. With Jason and then Mike as President of the chorus and Daniel as Director, the BigO was headed in the right direction taking them back to a district title.

About a month and a half ago, Sobo was put into the hospital feeling very tired and lethargic. Through many tests, and two more hospital stays, it was discovered he had a very aggressive form of cancer that had metastasized to his liver. Mike would not leave the hospital again. He passed quietly on July 7th at approx. 6:30 am.

Mike impacted many in the Barbershopping community. From coast to coast and I have no doubt some from around the globe. He impacted many people in the wider community as well. Mike was a staple in the Sunshine District and the BigO. He will certainly be missed.

He is survived by his wife Jan, sons Jeff and Kenny, and six grandchildren - Sydney, Ryley, Carson, Lily, Collin and Brielle.

Sing with the angels Mike!



Spring Convention



Our Spring 2025
Official Judges Panel
PC: Don Fuson
ADM: Dan Bodtke
MUS: Evan Boegehold, Melody Hine
PER: Jake Pirner, Dusty Schleier
SNG: Chad St. John, Renee Tramack



Thank you to the
photographers, **William
McCombie, Emily
Dearing, and Scott
Hershey**



Score
sheets
for the
competitions
are available
HERE.



Spring 2025 Convention Competitors



TRIBUTE

Miami, FL; Tampa, FL

Brian Lindvall, Ryan Killeen, Marshall Crowl, Sam Rinkenbaugh

Intl Prelim Quartet Qualifier (SUN)
1970 Points/81.9



NON-STOP

Central Carolina; Harmony STL; Longmont, CO; Loveland, CO; Orlando, FL;

Donell Torres, Johnny Bugarin Jr., Kealan Rivera, Michael Adams

Intl Prelim Quartet Qualifier (SUN)
1922 Points/80.1



ON POINT

Jacksonville Big O

Taylor Despars, Daniel Pesante, Timothy Keatley, Alexander Burney

Intl Prelim Quartet Qualifier (SUN)
Total: 1890 Points/78.8



BOURBON BROTHERS

Orange Blossom Chorus; Orlando, FL; Tampa, FL

Matt Nelson, Christian Espinoza, Alex Kuen, Matthew Boutwell

Total: 1818 Points/75.8



Spring 2025 Convention Competitors



4 FOR 4

Fort Walton Beach, FL

Dave Roberts, Lil Nicky Firth,
Luc-Dogg Lord, Jeff Buehler

1729 Points/72.0



LIMITLESS

Frank Thorne

Eliza Nicholson, Britney Spears, Juliet
Collins, Nicholas Collins

1725 Points/71.9



NOTA BENE

Tallahassee, FL; Frank Thorne

Miriam Hall, Norman Young, Timothy
Hughes, Jon Hall

1689 Points/70.4



DYNAMIX

Gainesville, FL

Dave Jacobs, Mike Roth, Bob Tucker,
Dave Nations

1564 Points/65.2



Spring 2025 Convention Competitors



TRILOGY

Tampa, FL; Orlando FL

Jesus Pacheco, Bryan Adames, Kevin Osano, Ben Anderson

Sunshine District Youth Quartet Champion
912 Points/76.0



ANTIQUE PHYSIQUES

Greater Pinellas, FL

Rhonda Payton, Elizabeth Jay, Mike Wood, Joe Kane

Sunshine District Seniors Quartet
Championship:
786 Points/65.5



JUSTIN TONATION

Miami, FL; Frank Thorne

Jacob Dern, Logan Sandefur, Isaac Tiu, Jason Fieler

771 Points/64.3



THE VOCAL CHORDS

Central Florida; Tampa, FL

Kollin Dembeck, Steve Hussell, Dave Bankard, Mick Griffin

746 Points/62.2



Spring 2025 Convention Competitors



ON A WING AND A PRAYER

Orlando, FL; Winter Haven, FL; Winter Park, FL

Vicki Bishop, Vicki Bensburg, Steve Culpepper, Bill Bensburg

736 Points/61.3



SUITE LIFE

Tampa, FL; Frank Thorne

Lex Goity, Cody Mathewson, Tripp Carter, Zach Gould

performed for evaluation score only



RADIANT

Orlando & Tampa, FL

Abbie Owens, Hannah Paschal, Emma Paschal, Katie Vincent

performed for evaluation score only



FLAT OUT

Orlando, FL

Bethany Rowlings, Olivia Hemmings, Adrien David-Sivelle, Jim Caudill

performed for evaluation score only

Spring 2025 Convention Competitors



SUNSHINE CITY CHORUS

St. Petersburg, FL

Director: Lance Lubin

Sunshine District Chorus
Champions

846 Points/70.5



CHORUS OF THE KEYS

Sarasota, FL

Director: Drew Kirkman

822 Points/68.5

Score
sheets for
the chorus
competition
are available
HERE.



EMERALD COAST CHORUS

Fort Walton Beach, FL

Director: Lucas Lord

Sunshine District Chorus Grade
Improvement Award [Spring]:
B- to B

820 Points/68.3



Spring 2025 Convention Competitors



Score
sheets for
the chorus
competition
are available
HERE.

ORLANDO HARMONY

Winter Park, FL

Director: Marshall Webb

813 Points/67.8



THE FLORIDA SUNCOAST CHORUS

Greater Pinellas, FL

Director: David Martinez III

795 Points/66.3



BARBERGATORS

Gainesville, FL

Director: Mark Slamka

794 Points/66.2



Spring 2025 Convention Competitors



Score
sheets for
the chorus
competition
are available
HERE.

HERNANDO HARMONIZERS

Hernando County, FL

Director: Bob McFadden

781 Points/65.1



HEART OF FLORIDA

Central Florida

Director: Chris Barthauer

780 Points/65.0



ORANGE BLOSSOM CHORUS

Orlando, FL

Director: Sean Stork

Sunshine District Chorus Grade
Improvement Award [Spring]:
C+ to B-

747 Points/62.3



Spring 2025 Convention Competitors



HARBOR CITY HARMONIZERS

Melbourne, FL

Director: Justin Walker

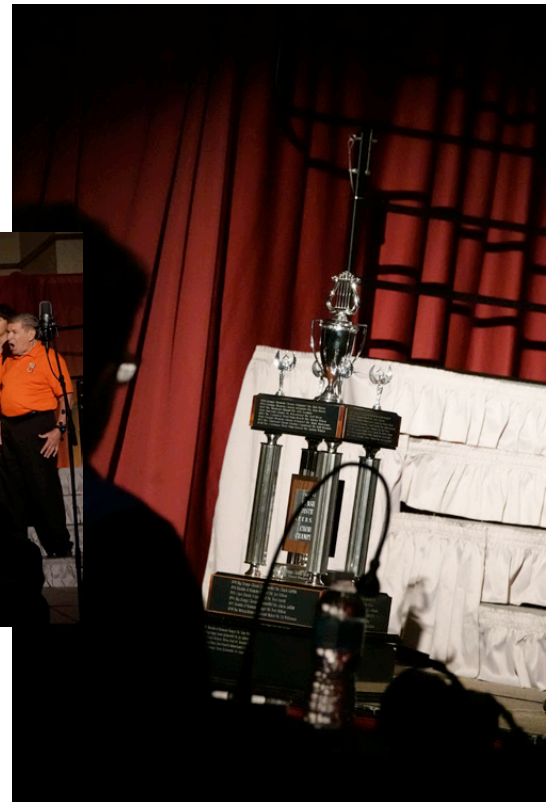
Sunshine District Most-
Improved Chorus Award and
Sunshine District Chorus Grade
Improvement Award [Spring]:
C+ to B-

745 Points/62.1

Score
sheets for
the chorus
competition
are available
HERE.



Big O sings off the trophy



2025 Sunshine District Board of Directors

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Roxanne Clapp

editor@sunshinedistrict.org



**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT** for the **ARTS**

arts.gov

SAVE THE DATES!! UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

**Fall 2025:
October 17-19**

Spring 2026: May 1-3

Fall 2026: October 16-18

Spring 2027: April 30 – May 2

Fall 2027: October 15-17





Sunshine District

Barbershop
Harmony
Society



Please send photos, articles, and other interesting tidbits
for inclusion in future publications of

The Sunburst.

Send to Editor@sunshinedistrict.org



Sunburst Deadlines

Mar 1 • July 15 • Nov 1



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13948 Sheffield Court, Wellington, FL 33414

Keep your personal information, home address, email address, telephone (home & cell) up-to-date in the Society database. Check with your chapter secretary if help is required.
DO NOT send personal changes to District staff or *The Sunburst* Editor.



The Sunshine District wants to ensure our performances and programming are accessible to everyone. Should you require a special accommodation, please contact us, and we will be happy to help you.