



2017 DAILY BULLETIN

DESERT NEWS



Friday
July 14th

8

POST CONVENTION 2017

8



Last Minute Articles & Photos

From the 2017 BHS Convention in Las Vegas, NV
July 3 - 9

Society Honors Grand Central Red Caps

Takes Two Steps to Correct Wrong

(submitted by Ford Fuller)

Grand Central Red Caps Quartet Honored at Saturday Night Spectacular

The theme of this year's Saturday Night Spectacular was "Together, We Sing" featuring the **Ambassadors of Harmony & The Vocal Majority** mega-chorus, along with quartets **Vocal Spectrum** and **Crossroads**. It was an awesome show!

This evening's program is about how our music brings us together. While we cannot erase the errors of the past, we do want to affirm, here and now, that our music is for all, regardless of race, creed or color. We celebrate the spread of our special kind of harmony to more diverse groups of people, here in America, and throughout the worldwide community, bringing together young and old, rich and poor, black and white.

But, perhaps the most poignant moment was a long-overdue correction of a horrible decision made by our Society in 1941. The story begins in 1940 when the National SPEBSQSA Convention was held in New York City at which time our society learned of a city-wide Barbershop Quartet Competition sponsored by the NYC Parks Department, that actually began in 1935. SPEBSQSA officers decided to invite the winner to the following year's convention to be held in St. Louis.

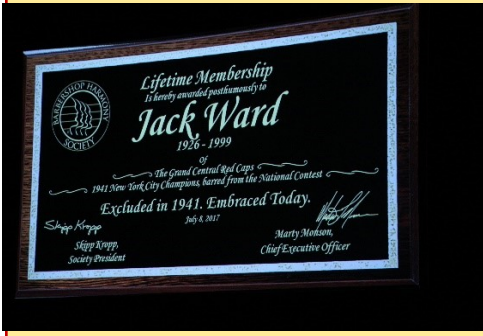
When the 1941 winner was determined, a telegram was sent to SPEBSQSA letting them know the winner. It was the **Grand Central Red Caps**—four singing train porters. But in an unfortunate reflection of the times, the response from the Society was negative: The Red Caps would not be eligible to compete because the Society now required competitors to be members. And membership was for whites only. It was an ironic situation, since many of the early practitioners of Barbershop harmony were African Americans. This decision by the Society resulted in the resignations from the Society of Parks Commissioner Robert Moses and former New York Governor, Al Smith.

What has bound thousands of men together in harmony for the last 80 years, has been membership in our beloved Society. And that is what we denied to the men of the Grand Central Red Caps in 1941. So I ask you to take 5 seconds and close your eyes and think about what your life would have been like without membership in our Society. While we can neither comprehend the personal impact each of the Red Caps may have felt, nor correct it, we can at least place a marker on this chapter of our history. We can at least say, "This happened to these four men. It shouldn't have. And it won't happen again!"

So in 2017, the board of the Barbershop Harmony Society decided to take two steps towards rectifying the nearly eight-decades-old slight by honoring the **Grand Central Red Caps** posthumously with honorary lifetime memberships. The plaques will hang in Harmony Hall. All four plaques are the same except for names and dates of birth, and read as follows: *Lifetime membership is hereby awarded posthumously to Owen Ward/Jack Ward/Robert Ward/William Bostick of the Grand Central Red Caps, 1941 New York City Champions, barred from the national contest. Excluded in 1941. Embraced today. Signed CEO Marty Monson & President Skip Kropp.* [Thunderous applause of approval!]

The second step towards rectifying the decades-old slight, President Skip Kropp made the following announcement: "I am pleased to announce tonight that at its board meeting on Tuesday, the Society BOD approved an initial investment of \$50,000 into a brand new Red Caps endowment. These dollars will be used to provide scholarships and other supports to encourage the broadest possible participation of promising young singers, music educators and directors of color. This is only a start, but with the help of our friends in Harmony Foundation, and all of you (i.e., us), we intend to grow this investment substantially over the next years and decades in order to realize over the years to come, the vision of everyone in harmony. Thanks once again, for making vision a reality."

Continued from page 1...



Grand Central Red Caps - 1941

QUARTET CHAMPIONS

Saturday night brought down the house...but only for a short time! A broken water main on the 5th floor of Planet Hollywood found water flooding out of light fixtures, one man was trapped in the north elevator, and it flooded about 2" deep on the casino floor just prior to the Quartet Finals start time. A FAST response by hotel maintenance staff fixed the water line, sucked up as much water as possible, and after redirecting the audience through an alternate route to the theater, the contest start was "miraculously" delayed for only about an hour!



ABOUT THOSE EIGHT STRANGE "LETTERS"!

This is for the benefit of the exploding number of young gentlemen rapidly populating the Society roster.

Our hobby's original name, **SPEBSQSA**, *The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc.* was intended as a lampoon on President Roosevelt's many New Deal "alphabet agencies." Because of the name's length and the difficult-to-pronounce acronym, Society staff and members now refer to SPEBSQSA as *The Society*. For decades, SPEBSQSA was the organization's official moniker, while the **Barbershop Harmony Society** was the officially recognized/sanctioned alternate.

Members were urged to use the alternate name, because it was felt the official name was an inside joke that didn't resonate outside the Society. In mid-2004, faced with declining membership, the Society adopted a marketing plan using "Barbershop Harmony Society" consistently and retaining the old name for certain legal purposes.

The old official name spelled "barber shop" as two words, while *barbershop* is generally used elsewhere.

In reference to the acronym SPEBSQSA, the Society has said "attempts to pronounce the name are discouraged". Unofficially, it is sometimes pronounced as if it were spelled "Spebs-qwa".

In late 2004, the Society established Barbershop Harmony Society as its new "brand name", with a logo/identity program released in 2005. Although the legal name remained SPEBSQSA, Inc., the decision was controversial, as many members felt the new name did not reflect a mission of preservation and encouragement of the style. Many members were concerned that the term "quartet" had been dropped, fearing a movement toward choral singing and downplaying quartet singing.



1st Place - Main Street



2nd Place - Signature



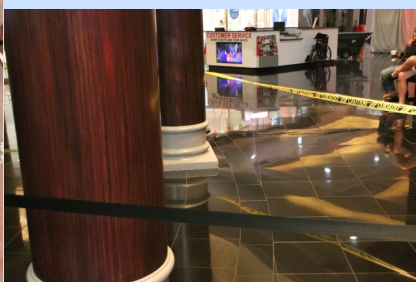
3rd Place - After Hours



4th Place - Throwback



5th Place - Quorum





**Vintage Mix - Mixed Quartet
(Quadruplet siblings)**

Here are photos of some of the Mixed Quartets who performed during the convention. From the response of the audience, this format of male and female quartets is gaining in popularity very quickly!



Double Date - Mixed Quartet



Me'Lange - Mixed Quartet



Sweet & Sour - Mixed Quartet



Southern Stride - Mixed Quartet

Photos of more competitors and performances during this week-long annual event.



Ambassadors of Harmony



**Blindside
(Australia)**



**Cottontown
(BABS)**



**Finest Hour
(BABS)**



Forefront - singing 'King George' from Hamilton



**Frenzy
(SAI)**



**Hanfris
(SABS)**



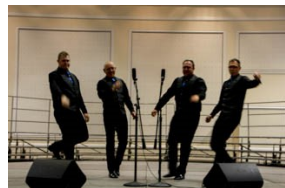
**LiveWire
(Harmony Inc)**



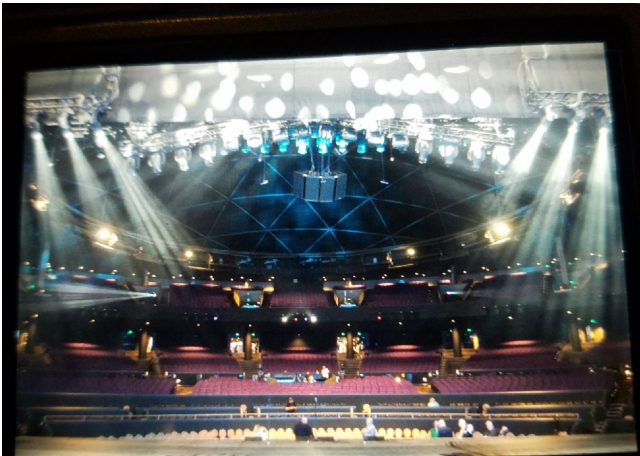
**PZAZZ
(LABBS)**



**Sound Connection
(six father/son couples in chorus)**



**Stockholm Syndrome
(SNOBS)**



The View from the Stage



Our Judges - 2017

More of our wonderful Barbershop Fans
(photos by Chris Wethered)





See You Next Year!!



Join us July 2 - 8 for International Convention in Orlando, FL at the Orange County Convention Center



"Tha..Tha..That's All Folks!"