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Red Bank Area Chapter
Mid-Atlantic District
Barbershop Harmony Society



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The following is an excerpt of an article that appeared in the **Asbury Park Press Online** on May 13, written by **Jerry Carino** with photos by **Tanya Breen**. A link to the full story and photos appears at the end of this piece.

'CARBERSHOP' SINGERS STAY IN TUNE IN MIDDLETOWN DURING COVID

MIDDLETOWN - Those passing Lincroft Presbyterian Church around dinner-time Tuesday might have noticed an unusual sight: A man standing alone in the parking lot, waving his arms at a bunch of parked cars.

The man, Craig Page, is directing a chorus. The singers are seated alone in those cars, forming a semicircle around him, with their collective harmony piping though their car radios at 94.9 FM.

“It’s like singing along with the radio,” said singer Allan Dean, who has a wireless microphone rigged to the sun visor of his Hyundai. “But you recognize the other voices and hear your own voice mixed in.”

This is a COVID-proof rehearsal of the Red Bank Area Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society — an organization for those who love to sing four-part barbershop harmony. *(more on page 2)*



Even though the pandemic is winding down, these crooners take extra precautions because you can't sing quality four-part harmony with masks on. Singing expels droplets like a fire hose, and they're mostly baby boomers and older.

So they've gotten creative.

"We call it Carbershop," Dean said. "It's worked out pretty well."

The Barbershop Harmony Society is a worldwide network with more than 19,000 members in the United States alone. The Red Bank Area Chapter is comprised of two choruses; Page's group is the Chorus of the Atlantic. Like everyone else in the performing arts, they were completely shut down by the pandemic. Then they started meeting weekly on Zoom to talk music theory. Now they are back to rehearsing as a group, which is essential for harmonizers.

"It takes a while to get back into the groove so you're clicking together as a unit," said Dean, who lives in Atlantic Highlands.

"Their voices are a little rustier," said Page, who is a music teacher by day. "You've got to hear the parts around you. If you're just singing on your own, it's not enough."

For years, they rehearsed at Red Bank Middle School. That's off limits now.

"Sometimes venues close temporarily and you have to find a new home, but we didn't think the home would be our cars," assistant director Kirk Thomson said.

It took a nifty feat of electrical engineering to make it work.

[You can read the full Asbury Park Press Online article at:

<https://www.app.com/story/news/local/culture/2021/05/13/carbershop-barberhop-harmony-society-red-bank-lincroft-middletown/5021652001/>

Thanks to **Allan Dean** for contacting the Press and making this happen.

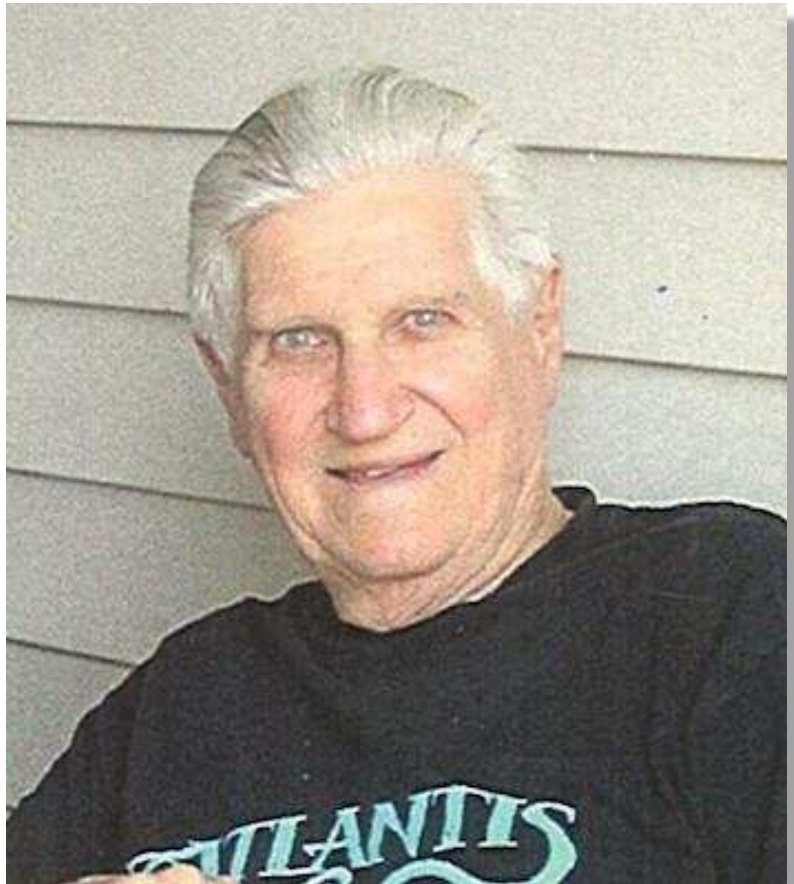


IN MEMORIAM - BOB PETERSON

On Friday, May 14, 2021, Bob Peterson, loving husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather died peacefully after a short illness at the age of 96.

Bob was born on July 21, 1924 in Woodbridge, NJ to Alfred and Anna (Panko) Peterson. After graduating from Woodbridge High School he joined the U.S. Army serving in WWII as an Antiaircraft Artillery Gun Crewman actively participating in The Battle of the Bulge in the European Theater. Bob retired from the Ford Motor Company in Edison in 1981.

Predeceased by his wife of 63 years, Raphaela "Peggy" (Trapani) Peterson, they raised three children, Christine (Bob) Peterson, of Fords, NJ, Bobby (Eileen) Peterson of Sausalito, California and Joann (Steven) Grillo, of Randolph, NJ, and Grandson Michael Grillo of New York City. Also survived by his dear sister Eleanor (Jack) Butler of Woodbridge, NJ. Bob was preceded in death by his sister Marion and her husband Warren Aquila. Bob also leaves behind many loving family and friends.



Bob had a passion for music, singing and entertaining which was fulfilled during the many years he spent as a member of the "Atlantic Express" Barbershop Quartet in the Red Bank Area Chapter, Mid-Atlantic District

SPEBSQSA, a chorus of dedicated fellow singers who brought much joy into Bob's retirement years.

Funeral services will be private. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the Flynn and Son Funeral Home, 23 Ford Ave., Fords, NJ 08863.

(See next page for memories of Bob)

Remembering Bob

The meeting had just ended, and 20 or so of us were headed over to the Elks. Pitchers were being poured and the laughing and singing began.

There was Bob Peterson, always looking for a quartet to hook up with. He got me, a newbie, and Kirk Thomson, another newbie. The first bari he cornered was little Mike D'Errico. (Mike lived too far south.) Then Bill Hagen came in, and before long, Peterson had formed Atlantic Express. Bob was proud of the name because he had seen it on a truck whizzing by him on the GSP.

Before too long, Hagen left, and we were lucky to find Alan Dean, who, strangely, was looking to “sing something.” One of our early gigs was at a political meeting in Atlantic Highlands. Another barbershopper who liked what we were doing, Tom Page, came along. It was Tom who took our Quartet Photo at that gig.

The one constant with Atlantic Express was Bob Peterson. We sometimes went to sing at a bar and left with \$5 in tips, or with nothing except that we had endless beer all night. Bob knew that it was important to sing to the ladies, and we hardly ever left a place without Bob getting a departing hug and kiss.

His favorite was the 150th Anniversary of Hoboken. After we greeted all the gowned and tuxedoed guests, they invited us to join the cruise around Manhattan, with free food and drink all night. We sang our entire repertoire of 36 songs on the ship, and Bob knew all the words.

I recorded 86 gigs for Atlantic Express, and it wasn't until the last one that Bob said, "Are we done yet?"

Bob and I would always share a room at Contest, because neither of our Peggys was motivated to join 72 hours of beer and song. It became the "changing room".

Directors loved him because he would always remind the Chorus of an impending KEY CHANGE! Bob Peterson was and is the epitome of a barbershopper. We love him and will miss him.

Jon Greene

Bob was the reason I joined the chorus. I found a flyer that asked, “Do You Like to Sing” so I showed up for a rehearsal to see what it was all about. While most men were far older than I was, one man made sure I had what I needed to sing along with the chorus - Bob Peterson.

Even though he was 40 years older than I was, Bob didn't act like it. He had the energy and sense of humor of someone my age, 28. Bob really had the most fun at the afterglow at the Red Bank Elks which made me more interested in hanging around with him and the rest of the crew.

This soon led to me being included in a chapter quartet called Atlantic Express which led to countless gigs and many hours of time at Bob and Peg's house in Fords for rehearsal. Within a year of joining Chapter chorus I took a job in Fords so I was only three blocks away from Bob's so I'd walk over for lunch and a chat and always a fantastic home cooked meal by Peg before quartet rehearsal. I think Peg's cooking was the start of my ever expanding waste line.

Bob and Peg loved me and my family and they always wanted to know how my kids were doing. I'm unbelievably blessed to have had them in my life and I always felt like part of their family.

Kirk Thomson

(More on page 5)



Remembering Bob

In the Spring of 2003, I wandered into the Presbyterian Church House at Shrewsbury not knowing a soul there. I joined the singers who were already warming up under Tom DeBruin. I was quickly seated in the baritone section. During the break, I met several men, including, Bob Peterson. A slicked-back, full shock of salt and pepper hair crowned his head and he had a merry laugh. He invited me to join the group who would afterglow at the Elks Club, where more 4-part harmony would ring over beers. I was hooked.

Bob loved to quartet and it was not long before Kirk Thomson, Jon Greene and Bob Peterson asked me to fill in on baritone for Atlantic Express. During our years together, we performed for birthday parties, anniversaries, senior living homes, community events, schools, fairs, and other venues. Jon says we performed more than 80 times. Always, Bob was the consummate lead. He shined when he was performing. He loved the adoration of the crowd and was always quick with a joke. He was often a perfect foil for Jon's jokes to the audience; like the time that Bob found a talking frog, but rather than kissing the frog and turning it into a beautiful princess as it was begging, "Bob said he'd have more fun with a talking frog."



Bob loved the ladies and he loved that the ladies loved him. Everywhere we went we would sing Honey/Little 'Lize to some woman within arms reach. He would often get a kiss on the cheek from the happy recipient. And Bob would invariably say to the woman, "Anybody ever sing a song to you with your name in it?" The quartet enjoyed free drinks when we ventured into a bar. We'd sing to some pretty woman and her man would send us a round of drinks like magic. Bob was just brilliant that way and I don't think he knew it.

Atlantic Express had our rehearsals at Bob's house in Fords. It was there that I met the love of Bob's life, his bride Peggy. We would sometime arrive early to rehearsal and have dinner with them. Usually, Peggy set out some desserts and refreshments then disappeared upstairs. We would rehearse around Bob's big dining room table and the time just slipped by with song after song.

Every year, we serenaded Peggy with a Singing Valentine. That is when Bob shined brightest. He performed at his best, as though this were the best gift he could give her - something straight from the heart.

He was a gift to us too.

Alan Dean

MUSIC IN MY LIFE - PART 4: THE LONG ROAD TO BARBERSHOP

By Chris Papa

After my pharmacy years, my life was hectically filled with being drafted into the Army, getting married, and finally getting into medical school. During these tough years classical music still dominated my life, but the 13 Gilbert & Sullivan operas stayed at the top. This kept my rhyming mind active. It paid off in medical school when my mentors could not ignore my chart notes because I wrote them in rhyme. My very first week of internship was topped by a rhyming emergency room report which was posted on the hospital billboard and made me famous to everyone who worked there.



My career in medicine was more than patient care, but included a fondness for research and teaching. I started the Johnson & Johnson Dermatologic Division and, once again, found I could get the attention of the top officers by writing my notes in rhyme. This then got me invited to all the important celebratory events, like promotions and retirements, where I was expected, and delivered, humorous material which honored the featured person.

J & J encouraged my medical teaching so when Rutgers changed to a full time medical

school in the 1970's allowed me the time to establish the Dermatology Department and, over the years, become a full Professor. My preference was then to leave J & J and devote myself to the medical school. I always wanted to really know and understand my patients.

So it was that there was one who turned out to be the Director of the East Brunswick Community Players, who knew I was a G & S enthusiast. He needed male voices for his production of "The Pirates of Penzance" and talked me into becoming one of the pirates he required. This was my very first stint, which was tough, since I was weighed down with taking care of patients and running a department at the medical school. Yet, for a month of Thursday-Sunday performances, I enjoyed every moment on the stage (see photo).

The next year, he produced "The Mikado" and, once again, made me one of the "gentlemen" and gave me a solo line in Act 1, when I ask the "Wandering Minstrel", who he is. That was it for my busiest years, before I retired. Then I immediately joined the Ridgewood Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company and became, believe it or not, one of the important bass voices they needed in the chorus. They did two different operas every year and had quite a busy schedule of performance over New Jersey and Connecticut, as well. The only problem was that Ridgewood is not geographically close to where I live in Colts Neck, and winter travel was particularly difficult.

My wife wisely insisted that I continue singing, but that it should be near our home. What to do? I looked up local barbershop information and was directed to call Phil Wilderotter. The rest is history. Ray Volz was particularly helpful teaching me to catch up with the huge repertory the chorus was performing back in 2000, with a large group of 60 singers. He, of course, also persuaded me to join The Matinee Idles, and I am forever grateful for all his efforts.

♪

SPECIAL MOTHER

By Chris Papa

Mother's Day just passed and reminded me that I had an opportunity to share something nice about, not mine, but a fellow chorus member's mother. I got to know and appreciate her long before I ever met the fellow and had a chance to harmonize with him. The young bass, **Robert Maber**, has a Mom who entered my life in an unusual fashion, and was a joy to know.

When I retired from medicine at age 65, it was most unusual. Most physicians "die with their stethoscopes on", but not me. There were several reasons why I gave up a most enjoyable career. My physician wife had retired and needed attention, I had prostate cancer and I was very unhappy with the new restrictions that were being placed on me by the administration of the medical school and hospital which limited the time I could spend with patients. I also looked at this as an opportunity to do things that I just never had time to do while in practice. Before I became a barbershopper, I started singing with the Ridgewood Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company. I loved G & S since a teenager, and had sung some even while in practice. I did stay with them for three years, six different operas, but left and joined the barbershoppers because the traveling up to Ridgewood was not easy.

The other thing I made up my mind to do was to get educated in something that I felt I knew nothing about, Art. So I entered nearby Brookdale College and enrolled in and "Introduction to Art" course. The teacher happened to be a "Mrs. Maber". She was all that I could have hoped for as a well-informed, enthusiastic lady, who had the burden of trying to teach a large class of mainly young, disinterested students, all about their long and complicated inheritance of art. She knew that I was not in the class because I had to be, or for credit, and put up with my constant asking of questions



and making comments, because the other students needed to get into the swing of things better. There was one requirement we all had, which was to choose a single artist and give a five minute oral presentation about the person and their work. Who to choose? If you knew me, it was obvious, use the opportunity to introduce Gilbert & Sullivan to the class, although they clearly were not the kind of artists that we were studying. So I ended up projecting a video of part the

opera "Trial By Jury", one of the very first collaborations of G & S. The comic opera, which is all about a breach of promise of marriage suit, has the plaintiff's counsel orating against the defendant and how awful he was to the plaintiff lady. In his song is the following:

Swiftly fled each honeyed hour
Spent with this unmanly male!
Camberwell became a bower,
Peckham an Arcadian Vale,
Breathing concentrated otto! –
An existence à la Watteau.

The mention of slimy places (Camberwell, Peckham) becoming heavenly you can guess, "Otto" is after of roses perfume and altered thusly to rhyme with the important last word Watteau, a French painter who specialized in heavenly love scenes. I also projected the actual works of Watteau.

Of course, the students were overwhelmed or just bored, and the teacher delighted that there was someone truly interested enough to bring in information that it filled 15 minutes of class time.

More to come.♪

Chorus of the Atlantic

Music Director.....Craig J. Page
Associate Music Director.....Kirk Thomson
ManagerDave Murch

Matinee Idles

Director.....John Huetz
President.....Joe LeCompte
Manager.....Rich Dunne

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