



Newsletter and Call for Donations

Coping with the Pandemic

Thank you for your consideration in helping us to continue to bring Harmony to our Community! We are the oldest Barbershop Chorus in North Carolina, having been in continuous operation since 1948. Our first mission is of course to support the Chorus and its activities. At the same time, and for all of these years, we have been a civic organization important to the fabric of our community.

In a normal year, we would be bringing the joy of a cappella harmony into the lives of our community members, particularly through:

- Our annual **A Cappella Festival Concert**, which includes performances not only by our own chorus, but also other a cappella groups – men and women – teens to seniors – from near and far
- Our annual **Singing Valentines** program
- Therapeutic musical connections with WNC dementia patients in conjunction with the **Dementia Society of America**
- **Holiday Community Mixed Chorus** (anyone is welcome to join us!)
- Complimentary performances in places such as:
 - Our local Community Centers
 - Eliada Home* – Helping Children Succeed
 - The VA Hospital
 - Tourist Baseball Games
 - And more!
- Other sponsored performances around the WNC region.

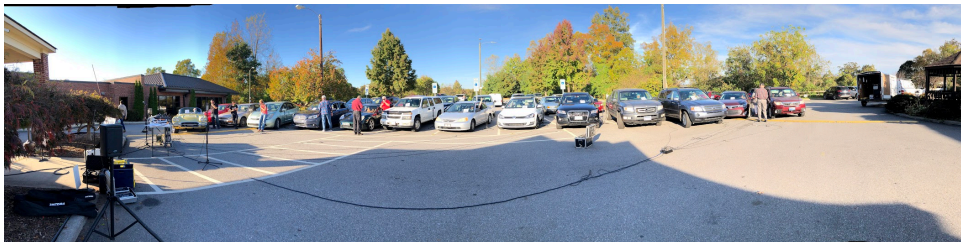
** We have also partnered with Eliada Home to help raise funds for their operations, and our members volunteer their time to help Eliada whenever and wherever they need a hand.*

In 2020 we were able to provide Singing Valentines to a lot of folks in February, before the pandemic began to impact our normal operations. Our last in-person indoor meeting was in early March 2020.

Since that time, **we haven't just rested on our laurels**. The Land of the Sky Chorus has been a standout innovator not only for keeping our own music alive, but also in setting an example for other choruses to follow. Thanks to the great ideas, innovations and determination of many of our members, we have pushed forward to keep our Barbershop Chapter/Chorus alive and as well as it can be. In March we immediately turned to online meetings via the Zoom application. We were not only able to do some innovative things to keep us singing and keep us together, we were also able to arrange for many music professionals to visit with us and share their incredible knowledge of our craft. What lingered as an issue for us, however, was the inability to harmonize over the Internet, due to the asynchronous speeds of our Internet connections.

In August we took another big step – we tested the idea of what we call “CARbershop” or “Drive-In Barbershop”. With one of our crafty members in the technical lead, we met at a predetermined parking lot, arranged our cars in a half-circle, and each received our own microphones through the car window.

We tuned into an FM signal being transmitted by our sound engineer, and were able to safely sing and hear each other harmonize in real time once again. Since then we've been improving the process, and we continue to meet in this manner a couple of times a month, with Zoom meetings filling the weeks in-between.



Of course, we are unable to perform live for the foreseeable future, and that brings its own disappointment to our prospective audiences and to us. It also brings us face-to-face with a **financial dilemma – no paid performances!** This forces us to **rely more than ever on our donors** to keep us alive and operating. We continue to incur monthly and annual operating expenses, and our once-healthy treasury balance dwindles with each passing month.

We are in high gear with brainstorming about how we can once again take our music to our audiences, with one idea being to take our CARbershop “on the road”, so to speak, to venues around Asheville. In fact, in October we did just that, giving a CARbershop performance in the parking lot of the Aston Park Health Care Center, broadcasting our FM signal throughout the Center for all to enjoy.

Our Chapter should have been hosting our District’s Fall Festival at the Crowne Plaza in mid-November 2020, which **would have been an important source of income for us**. As you can imagine, however, that activity became another victim of the Pandemic. Instead, the District hosted a virtual festival online. So we decided to take our CARbershop expertise a step further forward. Thanks primarily to the efforts of our Music Director Kati Swinney, our Sound Engineer Randy Johnston, our Video Coordinator Bev Greene and a very talented “photographer with a drone” named Gabe Swinney, we were able to produce a video of us performing, incorporating into it the beauty of our mountain surroundings. We are pleased to report that our video tied for first place in the chorus category! You can view it by following this link:

[Land of the Sky Chorus Fall Festival Video](#)

In any case, we are emphasizing social distancing and safety of our members and anyone around us in all of our activities. We are also looking into some evolving and promising devices/applications that will allow us to sync our voices online. This may result in **further expense to the Chapter**.

We are determined to keep our members active and our music alive. **We need your support** to continue to operate our chorus, bring music and harmony to our community when and where we can, and to eventually restart the advancement of our charitable activities into the community.

Please consider making a donation and helping to keep our chapter and the community that we serve in harmony! For your convenience you can use this [Donate!](#) button linked to our website to make your contribution, for either a one-time or monthly contribution Thanks for helping us to keep our music alive!

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