

Fifth annual Songfest — A truly warm feeling

By Ron Whiteside

It's nice to afford old people an opportunity to get out in the world at large and socialize. So a goodly number of Ontario's senior Barbershoppers (including me) stand indebted to **Al Davis** and his committee (**Bob Burrell, Joe Daybell, Laurie Hart, Jim Lyon, Ross Sutherland** and **Willy Watt**) for once again organizing and running Songfest for us.

This is the fifth annual Songfest, always held on the first Wednesday of June, (June 7th next year). For me, this was my third annual. I swear that I find it more enjoyable each year!

It's incredibly well organized and provides a golden opportunity to see (and hear) old barbershop buddies that you have only occasionally encountered in recent years. It gives a truly warm feeling and a very good supper too. Oh, and we can drive home in daylight which is very important to we older folk.

As Al's committee says, they are "Encouraging senior Barbershoppers to keep singing and performing for the enrichment of themselves, their audiences, and their favourite charities." And, they are succeeding admirably.

There were seven quartets on hand, including the *Country Four* (**Don Staples, Jack Allin, Merrill Brown** and **Glenn Allin**), who have been together for a remarkable (remarkable enough to make the Guinness Book of Records) 52 years. On this occasion, Merrill, still in Florida, was replaced very admirably by long-time Oshawa Barbershopper **Merv Scott**. These guys sound and look comfortable on stage, and are always a treat for the audience.

Also entertaining the crowd in various ways were *A Senior's Moment* (Etobicoke-Mississauga Chapter), *Back in Time* (St. Thomas Chapter), *Graytones* (Oakville Chapter), *Phase Four* (Burlington Chapter), *Together Again* (South Central Ontario) and *The Old Way* (East York Chapter).

As well, we were entertained by five Very Large Quartets (VLQs); *Big 8 Harmonizers* (Brighton Area), *Second Career* (Kitchener-Waterloo Region), *Vocal Maturity* (Barrie), and the guys who did all the work for Songfest, *Barons of Barbershop* (Scarborough Chapter) and a very large VLQ, *Suburbanaires*.

But that's not all. Since participation should always be a key part of the barbershop experience, we had another ringing **Roy Keys** arrangement, "I Wonder What's become of Sally" (thank you, Roy!) taught to us by **Jim**

Rehill, a tag taught by **Bruce Bonnyman**, and songs for all, led by **Milt Rainy, George Shields, Roy Keys, Ray Williams** and **Ron Whiteside**.

Risers, and a very good sound system (ably run by **Jonathon Woodstra**) were supplied by the *Scarborough Chapter*.

Finally, on behalf of all present, once again, many sincere thanks to all concerned in the organization and running of this fun event. For those who weren't there, especially those who've never been, put June 7, 2006 on your calendar now. You'll love it! ♣

Songfest 2005 facts

— Did you know?

By Waldo Redekop, editor

Did you know that Songfest was first started by *Ontario's Loyal and Devoted Fraternity of Active Retired Tonsorial Singers*? The acronym says it all.

Bob Burrell supplied me with the following facts about the recent Songfest. Did you know that

- & They had about 158 registrants this year, and about 150 people actually attended.
- & The oldest Barbershopper who actually performed was Ross Gilbert of the Suburbanaires, who is 85.
- & There were about nine performers there over 80.
- & There were about 25 over 75.
- & Some of the observers were even older, making this a true seniors gathering!
- & Bob is pleased to report they did a little better than break even again this year.

You sure don't want to miss next year's Songfest if you are a senior. A great afternoon of fun and fellowship, excellently run by a well organized committee. ♣



Photo—Waldo Redekop

Al Davis, the emcee for the afternoon, being entertained by the performers. Al sure keeps the Songfest moving right on schedule. ♣



[ED: Taken from Live Wire]

Board approves discounted dues for all students

— Rate adjusted to reflect realities of today's world of higher education.

Recognizing that men today seeking advanced degrees are less likely to be traditional four-year students, the Society Board recently enacted a change in dues structures, removing the limitation to men under age 23.

Henceforth, a student member is defined as a full-time student as of current expiration date. ♣