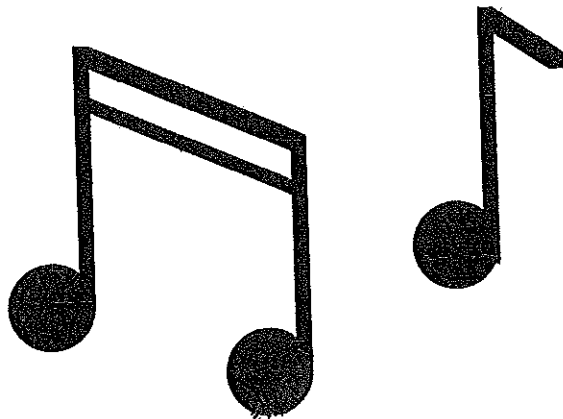


THE ROCKLAND
COUNTY CHAPTER

SPEBSQSA

A BRIEF
HISTORY

1963 TO 1993



By Dick Bourbeau

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ROCKLAND COUNTY CHAPTER S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A. INC.

The Rockland County Chapter of S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A. received its chapter charter in 1962, although it had been in existence since 1959. Ralph Treadwell, deceased, was the main organizer, and the Manhattan, Knickerbocker chapter, now defunct, was its sponsor. Don Conway was the first director.

Don was an amazing man, who, although he did not read music, was well known throughout the society for his arrangements. An example of one of his arrangements is "Margie" which our chapter had in its repertoire until recently. Don was best at wood shedding. After chapter meetings, he would organize a wood shedding session and arrange tags in his head, teaching the parts to each individual. He was not fussy about how many guys were in the group. He would devise a separate part for as many men as wanted to join in on the tag. Sometimes as many as six or seven men would sing the tag, each one singing a different part. Don directed the chapter until 1965.

The first meeting place of the Chapter was the Spook Rock Inn, an old restaurant on the corner of Spook Rock Road and Route 59 in Tallman. Very shortly after the chapter was chartered, the meeting place was moved to The Elms Restaurant in New City. Both the Spook Rock Inn and The Elms are no longer in existence. When the Elms burned down in 1966, the chapter met for about a year in the Lutheran Church in West Nyack, on the corner of Route 303 and Route 59. That is when Irv Popkave joined the chapter.

Some of the charter members of the Rockland County Chapter were Jack Eagan, Ralph Treadwell, Tony Lanzilotti, who is still a member of the Ridgewood, NJ chapter and the bari for the Muddy Creek Four, Roger Burke, who moved to Oklahoma, Torrie Tellefsen, Bud Gormsen, Bob Millspaugh, Everett Gardineer, who built his own helicopter from a kit, Bob Hewitt, a New City police Lieutenant, Joe Judge, who owned a bar on Route 59 in Spring Valley, John Marsi, who sang lead two octaves below the lead part, but could never learn the bass part, and who owned Marsi's Lincoln Mercury on Route 59 in Spring Valley, Paul Mattern Sr., the dad of our current member with the same name, Gerry France, an exec. with Avon Products, who later moved to the Midwest with the AMWAY Corporation, and Luther Snyder, a young, excellent musician, whom the chapter sent to chorus directors school, only to have him move away shortly after that, and others.

The first three quartets of the chapter were the F.O.F.'s (Four Old Farts), the W.D. I. S. Four (Waist Deep in Sh--- Four), and the Suffern Cats. The first two quartets did not last very long, but the Suffern Cats have now been in existence for more than thirty years, continuously, with many changes in personnel. None of the original members of the quartet are still in the chapter. Some of the people who were members of the quartet over the years were Bob Millspaugh, Gerry France, Luther Snyder, Bob Johnson, Andy Stanley, Bud Gormsen, Irv Popkave, Carter Cook, Joe Storer (Ridgewood Chapter), Pete Hanson, Aubrey Light (Poughkeepsie Chapter), and Ed Burden. The current members of the quartet are Dick Kurisko, Frank Comito, Dick Bourbeau and Ralph Clark.

Other quartets of the chapter were the "BS EXPRESS" with Charlie Anderson, Gerry Greenberg, Mike Yavits, and Shelly Morganstein. The 'BS EXPRESS' had to break up when Charlie Anderson had a stroke and was unable to sing. The quartet was most notable for its rendition of "Hay Mr. Columbus, Turn-a- The Ship Around" and "Muskrat Ramble." Gerry Greenberg was a poet of note and wrote several sets of comical lyrics and had them arranged for the quartet.

Another quartet from the 70's was one with with Bob Johnson, Paul Mattern, Russ Lang and Ron Garrison. The only song they learned was "Pennies From Heaven." Three members of another quartet in the early seventies were Frank Coppola, Eve Gardineer and Walt Sheehan, who was the president of Rockland Community College at the time. The names of the last two quartets and the other members have slipped my mind.

In 1965, the first director Don Conway found it necessary to move to Virginia, for business reasons, and became a very successful director of the Fairfax Chapter. The Rockland chapter was fortunate in getting the services of Gardner Peene, who came at the same time that the chapter meeting place was again changed, from the Lutheran Church to the VFW Club in Spring Valley. It was at the VFW club, that Max Dickstein visited during a membership drive and won a basket of cheer, and thus became a member of the Rockland County Chapter.

Max is especially noteworthy in this account because he was always unpredictable. A good example of Max's unpredictability was at the Suffern High School annual show. Right after the intermission, the chorus was on stage singing "Song and Dance Man" when Max climbed up on the risers from the rear. Ralph thought that that was a real neat thing for him to do. Another example, was the time the chapter was trying to raise funds by raffling a basket of cheer. At the time it was impossible to locate a basket to put the bottles of cheer into. Max came

to the rescue. On a trip to Mexico to obtain a divorce, Max found a large wicker basket and flew back from Mexico with it just in time for the raffle. On another occasion, Max took a trip to the International convention and presented the international board of directors with a proposal to adopt a new slogan, "STOP NOISE POLLUTION, SING." Max even created a logo and had it printed, at great expense to the chapter. Max was loaded with great ideas, most of which did not pan out. He did, however create some extraordinary sets for our shows in the seventies.

While the chapter was meeting at the VFW Club, the problem of finding a permanent meeting place was being solved. In the basement of Joe Judge's Windmill was a fairly large room which he said could be a permanent meeting place, where all of our memorabilia, plaques and photos could be permanently on display. Joe Judge's son-in-law and Dick Bourbeau worked for several months paneling the room, painting barber pole stripes on all the lally columns, putting in a new tile floor and ceiling. It was a grand opening night when the chapter finally met at its new meeting place. Joe Judge had underwritten the cost of the work that was done and thought it would also be good for his business. Unfortunately, the Marine Corps League was given permission to use our room for their meetings. Apparently other groups met there also because shortly thereafter the room started to look pretty shabby. The room was also getting too small for our growing chapter.

Our next move was to the Lakeside School on Route 45 in Spring Valley, through the good graces of Trefor Hopkins, who worked at the school. The chapter met there for several years. The headmaster of the school, Bob Whitsitt, who was quite a bass joined the chapter at this time and we were thus assured that the barber shoppers could use the auditorium indefinitely.

It was about this time that Gardner Peene, the director passed on, and the search was on for a new director. Bob Van Wort, a tenor in the Westchester County Chapter came to direct the chapter only for contest which was to take place only one month after Gardner's death. The chapter sang "Cruisin' Down the River" at that contest. When the contest was over Bob was gone. Finally a director was found from the Teaneck, NJ chapter. Dennis Murphy became the new leader and directed us for the next several years. It is safe to say that although the chapter did not win any contests during his tenure, everyone had a great time, and many new members joined the chapter, for Dennis had a sense of humor and a wealth of good jokes.

RON TUTORNS CAME 1969.

Ralph Clark was the director of the Teaneck Chapter when Teaneck decided to invite Dennis back to direct there. Dennis did move back to

Teaneck with all of his long time cronies again leaving Rockland County without a director. Dennis returned to the Rockland County chapter many times after leaving to act as MC for our annual shows.

That is how Ralph Clark became our new director. When Dennis returned to Teaneck, Ralph was invited to direct the Rockland chapter. In a sense Ralph and Dennis just changed places. Ralph was the director of the chapter from that time until December 1992. Of course, Ralph did leave the chapter for a short time in the 80's to direct a high powered Sweet Adeline chorus. After about twenty years, he decided to retire from directing and make place for our current director, Steve Hagerdon.

Shortly after Ralph began directing the chapter, the Lakeside School administration decided they did not want the barber shoppers meeting in their building. This time we moved to the Fiat Headquarters on Route 45. It was a great place to meet because their Xerox machine was close by, and since we were the only ones in the building in the evening, we were able to Xerox all of our music (ahem!! before we knew copying music was illegal, of course).

When Ralph left the chapter for a short time in the early 1980's, we had two interim directors. The first was Hank Voorman, who stayed one month. He taught us "Frankie and Johnnie," and "Doing the Raccoon," a couple of songs which the the guys did not seem to care for. A quick move was made to Ron Tutrone who had just moved from Brooklyn to Ridgewood, NJ. Ron was quite successful for a short time. He directed the chapter for an annual show and took us to one contest, where Ted Ashe fell off the risers during our performance. Ron had a motto, which was, "Small is Crap." At the time Rockland had only twenty eight members. Ron said that he wanted us to have fifty members almost immediately. On the night of our annual show at Pearl River High School, Ron did not come to the afterglow. Instead, he took his friends to his house and had his own afterglow. That was the last the chapter saw of him. Without saying a word, he up and quit, never telling anyone that he wasn't coming back. It was later learned that he was unhappy that we hadn't grown as a chapter as fast as he wanted.

While Ron Tutrone was directing, the Fiat people found out we were using all of their Xerox paper and asked us to leave, so we met for a time at the Tappan Zee Elementary School, which was very nice for Ken Dukes, because it was right around the corner from his house. It was here that we bought risers for the chorus and have used them ever since, although for a time they had to be stored in Al Will's horse barn when the chapter had no place to put them. (Needless to say when we finally retrieved the risers from the barn, the meeting room had the aroma of hay

and horses for quite some time.) Bill Niehaus and Wayne Phelan joined the chapter while we were meeting at the Tappan Zee School.

About a year after the chapter moved to the Tappan Zee School, it was sold and the new owners decided to rebuild it into condos. Again we had to move. This time the move was for the better. While we were doing a singout at Rockland Community College, the director of the Dr. Robert Yeager Health Center said that he would like to have us meet in the auditorium there. That became our best home. The facility was large, had a piano and a stage. Everything was going great. The art director of the complex, Ann even painted the props for our annual shows, a couple of which were "Stocks and Blondes," "Christopher Columbus," and "Snow White and the 27 Dwarfs." All of these shows were written by our own Gerry Greenberg, who has unfortunately retired and moved to Florida. It is worthwhile mentioning here that until a few years ago all of the Rockland shows were written by chapter members, most worthy of which were the Bicentennial show of 1976 written by Ed burden (who also authored several others), and the alien show, written by Walt Corwin, our current chapter president. Walt Corwin's show was most notable for the ears which all of the members had to wear as they entered the rocket ship on a trip to the moon.

As all good things must come to an end, so did our stay at the Yeager Health Center. With a change in administration there, it was decided that the auditorium could no longer be used on a permanent basis and they asked us to leave. It was unfortunate for them because the chapter, weekly, entertained and became friendly with many of the geriatric patients at the complex who would stop by at rehearsals. It was not uncommon for many of them to be served coffee and doughnuts each week during our rehearsal break. (Remember Alice?) It was at this time that Joe Polochko became the permanent coffee server for the chapter. A job which nobody else cared to do, but Joe kept at it for several years until his present illness forced him to retire.

Wayne Phelan came to the rescue this time, getting the chapter a meeting place in St. John's Episcopal church Nursery School in Valley Cottage. Despite the fact that we had to move the kiddie chairs into the corners and put the toys away each week, we had many great meetings there until Mike Zweiter obtained a meeting room for us at the Brick Church in Pomona. This meeting place was very satisfactory, because it was free, and all the church wanted in return for its use was an occasional performance. But at this time the Gulf War broke out and the minister of the Brick Church, who was also in the Army Reserves, was called up to active duty. While he was away, the trustees of the church decided that an occasional singout was not enough payment for the use of the hall. They wanted an additional \$100 dollars a week, which was

of the hall. They wanted an additional \$100 dollars a week, which was way beyond our budget, so once more we had to move. Mike Zweiter again came to the rescue, searching and finding our current meeting hall.

As mentioned before, during 1991 Ralph Clark began dropping hints that he would be retiring from his teaching profession shortly and we should begin searching for a director. To his credit, he gave the chapter all the time it needed for the search. Although Ralph Clark has retired from his directing job of so many years, he has not quit the chapter. He has worked many hours making the transition period for the new director an easy one. He is acting as the assistant director, has written the script for our new singout package, and will be the Program Vice President of the chapter for 1994.

There have been many dedicated chapter presidents through the years. We have been fortunate to have had Trefor Hopkins, Frank Comito, and Ken Dukes among others who did great jobs for the chapter. But we must mention the tenure of Mike Zweiter as being one of the most productive. Because he had retired from his school principalship, he was able to spend most of his time working on programs for the chapter. In his tireless efforts, he got us back on the contest trail, which we hadn't been on in many years. We were fortunate, in our first two contests back to win the small chorus awards, which entitled us to sing in the district chorus contest in Ocean City, Maryland. These were memorable times, because the chapter reserved the Flamingo Motel near the convention hall, and we had a couple of great weekends, singing in the contests and enjoying each others company at restaurants, walking the boardwalk and partying at the motel in the large room that they provided for us. We can thank Mike for practically forcing us to do these things that were such great fun and so memorable.

It was at the second Ocean City weekend that one of our members met Steve Hagerdon, an old friend from the Sussex County Chapter, who was also directing a Sweet Adelines' chorus. When broached about directing the Rockland County Chapter, Steve said that he might be available the following year. Since this was in October of 1992, it was thought that Steve would be available in late 1993 or early 1994. Again Mike Zweiter!! It was less than a month later that Steve came to the chapter for an interview. And because of Mike, Steve became the director of our chapter in January of 1993. Mike was also instrumental in having the Rockland Chapter sponsor a mini-hep school at Nyack College. He is currently the Area Counselor of our Metro Division.

This story would not be complete without mentioning the contributions of at least one other member of the chapter. Frank Comito, while running

his own carpet business has worked tirelessly over the years to help our chapter become successful. He has been Program Vice President on several occasions, and at least twice has been the President. He is almost always on the chapter officer selection committee each September. But his most important contribution to the chapter is his golf outings. For twelve years now the chapter has had a golf tournament each June. Frank has singlehandedly run the tournament, arranging for a place to play, finding a place for the banquet, securing a guest quartet, soliciting prizes and gifts, MCing the program for the day, running the raffle of the golf club sets, and doing all of the small coordinating jobs necessary to make these golf days successful. He has also conscripted about eighty per cent of the golfers for the tournaments. Because of Frank, the chapter has been able to remain solvent. The money that was made from the golf tournaments was used to fill the chapter coffers and has paid the chapter expenses in the last six years since the chapter has not had an annual show.

Ken Dukes can also be singled out for his outstanding contributions to the chapter. He has not only been the chapter president for two terms (without much to say), but has also held the office of secretary and treasurer. Since giving up the presidency, he has been responsible for all of the chapter singouts and has earned the chapter much good publicity and money. Ken is the one who is always putting notices about chapter activities, and calls for new members in the local newspapers.

Over the last thirty years there have been hundreds of good times at chapter meetings, sing outs, installation dinners, pizza parties, Ladies' Nights (hosted by Frank Comito), picnics with bushels of cherry stone clams, (Which Rudy always has to steam before eating), auctions made notable by the auctioneering of Shelly Morganstein, and Valentine's parties. There have been thousands of pleasant memories. The chapter is going strong and is still growing.

Hopefully no member will feel slighted because he has done something memorable for the chapter and has not been mentioned. Many men can be cited for their outstanding leadership roles and hard-work to better the chapter. For those who have contributed and not been mentioned, THANKS for your contribution to thirty years of great fun and memories.

Dick Bourbeau



*Petition for the Organization
of a*

Chapter in ROCKLAND COUNTY, NEW YORK
(City) (State, or Province)

of the

Society for the Preservation and Encouragement
of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc.

To be known as "The ROCKLAND COUNTY
Chapter of SPEBSQSA".

HEADQUARTERS
6315 THIRD AVENUE
KENOSHA, WISCONSIN

S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc.
6315 Third Ave.
Kenosha, Wis.

ROCKLAND COUNTY, NEW YORK
(City and State, or Province)

JULY 1, 1961
(Date of Application)

Gentlemen:

Acting in the belief that a chapter of S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc., established in ROCKLAND COUNTY, NEW YORK would be to the best interests of this community and

that it would bring to our citizens an opportunity to find new pleasure in reviving the old songs and to become identified with a movement for the preservation and encouragement of a traditional American form of folk music — the barber shop quartet;

that it would develop a spirit of fellowship, friendship and cooperation for the good of our members and for the community at large;

that it would provide an instrumentality by which its members might promote community service and contribute through singing to altruistic causes and to patriotic events;

that there are available enough men of high character and with an appreciation of good music to meet the charter membership requirement, carry on the activities of a local chapter and to fulfill all obligations to the International Society;

that if such a chapter is formed in this community it will become a worthy part of S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc.;

we, the undersigned, as representative citizens, give our unqualified endorsement to the movement and petition the International officers to charter a Chapter of S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc. in ROCKLAND COUNTY, N. Y. to which end we pledge our active support, and our firm determination to abide by all the tenets of the Society's Code of Ethics, its By-Laws, all rulings of the Board of Directors and all legislation enacted by the House of Delegates.

This petition must be accompanied by the following items:

1. Check to cover:

a. Initiation fee @ \$3.50 per member.

*b. Per capita dues and Harmonizer subscription for each member.

(*Amounts of per capita dues and Harmonizer subscriptions to be remitted are taken from the following schedule: — date petition is submitted determines schedule to be used).

		Per Capita		
		Dues	Harmonizer	Total
Jan. 1 — Mar. 31		\$4.00	\$1.50	\$5.50
Apr. 1 — June 30		3.00	1.15	4.15
July 1 — Sept. 30		2.00	.75	2.75
Oct. 1 — Dec. 31		5.00**	1.90**	6.90**

**Pays to Dec. 31 succeeding year

2. Copy of Standard Chapter Constitution adopted by your "Chapter".

3. Typewritten rosters: (Names — (please give first name) and addresses).

a. Members.

b. Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer) including Chorus Director and District Delegate (s)

4. Information as to date, place and time of regular meetings.

NOTE — Each Charter Member is required to manually sign this petition.

It is a requisite that all signers of this petition for charter, and all members taken into the chapter subsequently, be male, white, and of good character

Name	Mail Address	Occupation, Business or Profession
Cyril M. Fendell	36 Sky Meadow Rd. Suffern, N.Y.	TRANSPORTATION
Jack Egan	6 Roberts Road Monsey, N.Y.	Engineering
Fred W. Vance	60 Spok Rock Road Suffern N.Y.	Packaging Engineer
Donald J. Conway	12 Red Hill Rd. New City, N.Y.	Research Engineer
Torrey A. Tellefero	12 Fremont Ave. Nanuet, N.Y.	Sales Engineer
Robert H. Newitt	Torne Brook Rd. Ramapo, N.Y.	Police officer
C. Robert Arnold	7 Brewery rd. New City, N.Y.	Telephone Installer
C. R. Hunt	13 Palisades Dr. West Nyack, N.Y.	ENTOMOLOGIST
Paul H. Mattern	8 Fairview Place Suffern N.Y.	Package Designer
Edward Hartwell	25 Malthie Ave. Suffern N.Y.	Postal Supervisor
Robert J. Lehman	41 A VIOLA RD Suffern N.Y.	Bank Officer
Frankly J. Haas	21 Hall an New City N.Y.	Sewer
Luther H. Snyder	17 Boulevard Suffern, N.Y.	Radio & T.V. service
Robert H. Millspaugh	23 Anger Drive Suffern N.Y.	N.Y. TELEPHONE Co.
W. C. Swinney	158 Viola Rd Suffern N.Y.	Monument Retaining
John P. Marai	Hempstead Rd Spring Valley N.Y.	Auto Dealer
Galt Morner	Bronx N.Y.	Food Broker

Population of city or area to be covered by this proposed chapter 100,000
What place or places are available for Chapter meetings and what auditorium is available for the
Chapter's functions which will, from time to time, be open to the public SCHOOLS

Local References (Give names and addresses of at least two representative citizens of your community, other than charter members of your proposed chapter, who are acquainted with the petitioners)

MRS. RUTH S. WATSON QUAKER RD, SUFFERN, N.Y.
MR. LOUIS F. MAGED - 705 POOR ROCK RD. SUFFERN, N.Y.

To whom should the reply to this petition be addressed RALPH M. TREADWELL
26 SKY MEADOW RD., SUFFERN, N.Y.

Declaration of Sponsoring Chapter

and Recommendation by International Board Member and District President

The Westchester County Chapter, acting as sponsor, is familiar with the petitioning group and believes it to be fully qualified to receive a chapter charter in S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A.

By Ernie Matsper Deans Saena, Secy.
Walter W. White
President

On 8/21, 1961

Recommended:

By J. H. [Signature]
International Board Member

On Aug. 25, 1961

Recommended:

By [Signature]
President of M-A District Association of Chapters

On 8/24, 1961

Do Not Write in This Space

ACTION TAKEN

By John [Signature]
Int'l President

On 9/7, 1961

By Robert M. Hayer
Int'l Secretary

On 8/28, 1961

Remarks:

RECEIVED
SEP 8 1961
SPEBSQSA, INC.
MEMPHIS, TENN.