



Fun & Fellowship in **Four Part Harmony**

By Tim Ernandes

I'm thrilled at each rehearsal when I come into a room of men from all walks of life and musical backgrounds, chatting about every thing under the sun, and the pitch pipe blows. Suddenly, the chaos ceases and a pitch is taken. A song begins, and the voices blend with a synergistic relationship to form that sound we so affectionately call Barbershop.

~ Gary Bennett, SML Harmeneers



What do a retired Air Traffic Controller, an attorney, a decorated veteran Navy pilot, a diplomat, and a Sunday school teacher all have in common? Aside from being retired, they all share a love of singing in barbershop harmony. They could be your friends, neighbors, fishing buddies, and maybe even your pastor.

If ever there was evidence of music being a universal language, you'll find it when you get to know The Smith Mountain Lake Harmeneers. These are men from varied backgrounds, who

join together one evening a week for fellowship, rehearsal, and the pure joy of singing.

For these gentlemen, The Harmeneers is a delightful blend of fun, camaraderie, community service, and dedication to the craft of Barbershop Harmony. There is one trait that binds all these men together: they derive great satisfaction from blending their individual voices into chords and creating that unique sound.

Barbershop singing has its roots in 19th Century America. It is considered to be

a "melting pot" product of immigrant influences, with a particularly strong African influence. Many of the early quartets that practiced what would be called the "barbershop" style were black southern quartets, who often sang in barbershops. In some places, it seemed that every barbershop had its own quartet. The term appeared for the first time in print in 1910, with the publication of the song, "Play That Barbershop Chord".

Ask the average individual about their musical tastes, and it's not all that often