

How the Arizona Quartet Chapter Operates

See the AZQC website and go to the FAQ page, or click here:

<http://www.spebsqsafwd.org/azqc/AZQCFAQ.html>, from the FAQ page on chapter mission:

“The Arizona Quartet Chapter is a chapter dedicated solely to the advancement of four man barbershop quartet singing. There is something about singing a barbershop chord with only three other guys that cannot be duplicated in any other combination. For many men who are in the barbershop singing hobby it was just such an experience that caused them to continue to attend chapter meetings, contests and conventions. Unfortunately many of these venues do not offer enough opportunities to sing with just three other guys. This chapter seeks to give it's members more opportunities to sing in four-man quartet combinations. The chapter does not intend to form a chorus but rather, will engage in activities that will promote quartet singing.”

Almost all who attend our biweekly meetings can hold their part in a quartet. Most have quartet experience, and know to follow the lead, voice match for blend, etc. We have been averaging about 16 guys at a meeting, which allows for one quartet singing a set of 2 songs, and the others enthusiastically listening. If we have established quartets there (usually 2), they sometimes sing sets of 3 or 4 songs. In the middle of the meeting, we sometimes do tag-out quartets for 15 minutes or so. Or someone teaches a tag, and quartets perform it. Once, we tried 4 basses, 4 leads, 4 tenors, and 4 baritones. Lots of laughs. (basses were best). There are several incidents of choosing someone, who hasn't sung in a while, to pick 3 other guys and do a 2 song set. We have 4 “Strictly Barbershop” booklets and 4 “Heritage of Harmony” books to read out of on occasion, which gives us variety.

The guys seem to like the informal setting, and sometimes stick around after the meeting to sing. (We go from 7 to 10PM).

We have found that too much structure doesn't go over too well. A couple of us take the posture of selecting quartets, and often are overtaken with a selection the guys put together.

There is a problem if more than 16 guys show up. Too much sitting and not enough singing. We have tried break-out rooms in the past, but not recently. We try to send a quartet to the club room to sing a couple for the American-Italian Club patrons. They like it.

Valentines are our revenue source. There is a conflict with our dual members because their chorus chapter puts more demands on them than we can get away with. Therefore we try to give them quartet time they don't get in the chorus. We are painfully aware that we really represent an Amateur Volunteer Hobby, and don't want to drive them away.

It is my observation that when you get 4 guys with quartet experience, put them together at random, you still hear chords ring. We try to emphasize that. Hope this gives you a look at our quartet chapter.

Jim Milner
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