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“Valentine’s Day”

by  
Tom Holbrook

I spent Valentine’s Day and the day before with three of my friends doing all I could do to make heroes out of some gentlemen who had hired us to deliver singing valentines to their sweethearts. Most of these sweethearts were wives but some were fiancés and girlfriends. Over the two day period we sang to over 25 ladies who had no idea we were coming to see them. In addition to the songs we sang to them they also received a box of candy, a valentine, and a long stem silk rose.

Although this is a regular yearly fundraiser for The Heart of Florida Barbershop Chorus, this was my first time experiencing it first hand. I had hired one of their quartets last year to surprise Judy on this annual day of love and she was very appreciative, so I thought it would be a fun and worthwhile thing to do.

Being a member of a quartet now, it was expected that we participate in the event and we gladly did. Scott, Bob, and Ken were the other members of the quartet and each of us had generated one or more of the “clients” for whom we sang. Others were assigned to us by our President Marty and we traveled the length and breadth of The Villages and surrounding environs to keep our appointments. Sometimes it was a little difficult to make it at the exact time, but we did it somehow.

Of course, there were a couple of times when mis-communication entered into the equation resulting in either no client or no quartet showing up at the expected time or place. Even with those snafus occurring, after some scurrying around we were able to complete our appointed tasks. One client was supposed to be teeing off at Nancy Lopez at 7:48 am with her husband so we arrived at the course at 7:35 only to find that they had teed off at 7:28. What to do but to hop in the car, hurry down the road and head them off when they were crossing the street on their way to the 3<sup>rd</sup> hole. Talk about surprises... we had the sweetheart sit in her cart and we serenaded her while all the time she was muttering under her breath... “I can’t believe this is happening... I can’t believe this is happening...” Hey folks, neither rain, nor sleet, nor fog or a missed tee time keep these traveling troubadours from their appointed rounds.

We sang for secretaries in their offices, teachers in their classrooms, grocery checkout girls at their cash registers, bowlers in the alleys, wives in their homes, pro-shop employees, and every now and then, some ladies sitting around their table in a restaurant. One of my favorites was at Katie Belle’s where we asked the band to take a break and allow us to sing from the stage to a sweet lady standing in the middle of the dance floor all by herself, in front of a several hundred other Katie Belle guests. They didn’t mind stopping their line dancing for an expression of love from a husband

who was out of town. One lady, as we were leaving said, "Boy, you guys have got a great job." We couldn't agree with her more.

Everywhere we sang someone would ask, "How could I get you guys to sing for my wife?" I want to repeat that this is a yearly event our Chorus produces as a fund raiser and we will sing for anyone who contacts us to tell us when, where and for whom. The telephone number you may call at anytime, 24/7, is 352-365-7999. Just leave your message on the voice mail and someone will get back with you right away. I might also add the chorus and the quartets sing all through the year for many different occasions and events so if you need special entertainment for hire... give us a call at the same number. For Valentine's Day one of the other quartets said they had been hired to sing for a dog's birthday party... how quirky is that?

This would be an opportune time to once again remind all of you that if you liked what you heard from the quartets who sang for you on Valentine's Day you should hurry to the Villages Box Office and buy tickets for the annual Spring Show we are holding on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, at the Savannah Center. You'll hear the entire chorus consisting of over 100 semi-good looking guys, several of our chapter quartets and our very special guest Championship quartet, "County Line Grocery." Tickets are going fast so get going and get them before they're sold out.

Also, please don't forget the Village Voices concert, where our 130 voice mixed chorale will be singing some great pieces of music consisting of: songs from the 40's, some spirituals, a Handel piece, some Patriotic pieces, and some well known love songs you all know and love. Tickets for the March 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> concerts to be held at the Church On The Square are on sale now at all Box Offices around the Villages.

Folks, there's nothing like sweet music to help take the cares off your mind and put warmth back in your heart... Both of these organizations should be considered as primary sources for your ongoing need for beautiful soul-soothing harmony. Give them a try right away... and don't forget to save the phone number above for next year's Valentine's Day singing valentines. Allow us to help make you a hero in your sweetie's eyes. While you're at it, ask about becoming a member in the group.

See you next week.