



The MVEer Monthly February, 2020

Groundhog Day – Dick Marcus

QUESTION: “If the groundhog sees *his shadow* does it mean that spring will return in less than six weeks?” *My college students weren’t sure. Maybe you aren’t sure either.*

Traditionally, **Punxsutawney Phil** is roused out of a perfectly nice sleep to be put on display on a chilly February 2nd morning.



When the groundhog emerges from his burrow and sees his shadow due to clear weather, it will retreat to his den and **winter will persist** for six more weeks. If he does not see his shadow because of cloudiness, **spring will arrive early**. I root for NOT seeing his shadow. But I warn you, over the past 103 years, Phil and his predecessors in the job have only a 39% accuracy rating.

Wisconsin has several places that celebrate Groundhog Day as in Punxsutawney, PA. Sun Prairie, just northeast of Madison calls itself *The Groundhog Capital of the World*, who has **Jimmy the Groundhog**, who will be predicting again for the 72nd time, with no better prediction rating than Phil. Also our Milwaukee County Zoo has a groundhog, Gordy, who predicts our weather. On Sunday, February 2, visitors are invited to celebrate Groundhog Day at the Milwaukee County Zoo and watch as **Gordy the Groundhog** emerges from his burrow to make his furry forecast. Activities take place at 10:30 a.m., in the Northwestern Mutual Family Farm at the zoo.

And, without looking at my shadow, *Dick the Economist*, predicts MORE than 6 weeks of winter as March 15 is six week after February 2, and winter never ends until April or sometimes continues into May in Milwaukee. I bet I will be more accurate than Punxsutawney Phil.



Calendar for February

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Sunday, February 2 | Groundhog Day | |
| Monday, February 3 | Rehearsal | St. Luke's at 7pm |
| Sunday, February 9 | Singing Lessons & Installation at 6PM | |
| Monday, February 10 | Rehearsal | St. Luke's at 7pm |
| Monday, February 17 | Rehearsal | St. Luke's at 7pm |
| Monday, February 24 | Rehearsal | St. Luke's at 7pm |
| <i>Tuesday, February 25</i> | <i>Board Meeting</i> | <i>St. Luke's at 7pm</i> |
| Monday, March 2 | Rehearsal | St. Luke's at 7pm |

Installation Banquet and Awards 2020 – Derek Balke

Our installation banquet will be on **Sunday, February 9th at 6pm**. All are welcome at the festivities! **Steve Scott** is our excellent installer.

Meyer's Restaurant and Bar

4260 South 76th Street, Greenfield, WI 53220, 414-321-4400,
<https://www.meyers.restaurant/about/>

Cost: \$22.50 per person (significant others and friends are very welcome!)

The meal will be served family style, with mouth-watering broasted chicken and succulent beef tips over noodles. *(There are other options available for vegetarian guests.)* We have over 40 who are already coming, but if you've not RSVP'd to Tom Weber or me yet, let us know.

Feel free to pay me at the door with cash or check made out to MVE. *Derek Balke 414-708-3373 - Cell*

More on Steve Scott

Steve Scott was named *Music Education Specialist* for the Barbershop Harmony Society, joining the staff in July, 2017. In this capacity, he oversees the development and implementation of new interactive and online learning for *Harmony University*. Steve leads the operation of music-



based curriculum at BHS education events and he assists in the *Healthy Chapter Initiatives*.

Steve is a highly-experienced educator, having taught voice and choir in higher education in Ohio, Georgia, and Kansas. He completed course work for a Ph.D. in *Vocal Pedagogy* from the University of Kansas and earned an MA in Vocal Pedagogy and an MM in *Choral Conducting* from The Ohio State University, where he also received a *Singing Health Specialization*; he also has a BME in Choral Music Education from Utah State University. Steve is an active researcher, presenting at national and international music conferences. His research interests include the bio-physiology of the barbershop singing voice, barbershop acoustics, barbershop history, and Brazilian art song.

Steve joined the Barbershop Harmony Society at age 11 in the chorus his dad directed and in which his brothers sang. He is a certified Singing judge and is a frequent faculty member for *Harmony University* where he teaches voice techniques and vocal pedagogy. Steve has been active as a clinician, coach, and chorus director, and has sung in various quartets and choruses, including the 2016 silver-medalist chorus, Central Standard of Metro Kansas City. Steve served on the CS music team as Vocal Coach and works with choruses through our BHS.

Steve's pride and joy is his family: spouse, Jaylene and daughter, Lydia. They love their home and the city of Nashville.

Awards at the Banquet

The President's Award - Presented by Derek Balke

The Do-It Award -
Presented by Tom Weber

**The Russ A Foris
Directors Award** -
Presented by Bryan Ziegler

**The Barbershopper of the
Year Award (BOTY)** -
Presented by Tom Rogina

**The Rookie of the Year
Award** - Presented by Tom
Weber



Stalemate at Midwinter in Jacksonville – Dave Baxter

Our journey to the 2020 Midwinter Convention started with reuniting after many years off as an official quartet. The “artists” formerly known as **Checkmate** (Harry Hanson, Brad Charles, Jim Franklin, and Dave Baxter) and now known as **Stalemate** dusted off the pitch pipe, as well as some old tunes, and began rehearsing once again in late August of 2019. After taking the stage in Rochester, MN, and qualifying for the Seniors Quartet Competition in Jacksonville, FL, we were ready to chase a dream.

The Midwinter was a new experience for three of us, as Harry had competed with a previous quartet. Jacksonville, in January, was a welcome sight. It wasn't hard to take the 75+ degree



***Stalemate** - Harry Hanson, Brad Charles, Jim Franklin, Dave Baxter
LO'L District Representative at
Senior's International Quartet contest
at Midwinter in Jacksonville, FL*



weather. We competed at the **Florida Theatre**, which first opened in 1927. The theatre has 1,918 seats and was a wonderful stage to perform on. All of the sessions were sold out, and we learned that this convention is always well attended. The audience was also very receptive of all performers.

One of the things that impressed us all were the young men and women that were competing in the **Next Generation Junior Quartet** and **Chorus Invitational**. These kids not only sang and performed well, but were also involved in singing tags throughout the week with us “old men”. It was proof that singing is truly the universal language no matter what the age.



The thrill for us was being able to share the stage once again together and to have our wives there to support us as well. **Barb, Nancy, Meta, and Ronda....thank you! We love you!**



Ronda....thank you! We love you!

Although our 14th place finish was not where we wanted to end up, we were proud to represent the MVE and the Land O' Lakes District. We would like to thank everyone for the well wishes, and we look forward to learning some new charts that we can hopefully share at next year's convention in New York City.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We know the

crowd cries "**Croooooon**" for **Midnight Croon**, but may I suggest a crowd chant for your quartet? I'd suggest a chant with a four-beat clap: **We Want Stalemate! We Want Stalemate! We Want Stalemate!**

HoopsMania – Scott Ganswindt

HoopsMania is an exciting sweepstakes fundraiser based on college basketball's national championship tournament in March. It is an important fund raising event for the MVE. Sweepstakes participants can win up to \$4,000 for a \$20 ticket and lots of smaller cash prizes as



well based on the number of points scored by the basketball teams printed on their sweepstakes game cards.

Pick up your cards and sell them for \$20 each from me on a Monday night or email me at: (siganswindt@sbcglobal.net).



YOU CAN'T WIN IF YOU DON'T PLAY.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I won **twice** in our FootballMania fundraiser this fall!





A Little on the March King – and How He Helped “Write” the National Anthem – Mike Lietke

As explained earlier in the year, we are endeavoring to share some music to some larger audiences, and to avail ourselves for hire to various groups associated with this



summer’s political convention in Milwaukee. Thus, we paired up the **National Anthem** with **Stars and Stripes Forever**. The latter we know was written by **John Phillip Sousa**, but what does the former have to do with him?

The National Anthem, as we know, contains the flowing poetry of **Francis Scott Key**. The music was written ca. 1780 by **John Stafford Smith**, and was named “*The Anacreontic Song (Later To Anacreon in Heaven)*”. Interestingly, it was written to be a drinking anthem for a club of English musicians.

Neither here nor there, it soon became a popular song on both sides of the ocean, and shortly after Key’s poem was published, it was noted that the poem fit its meter fairly well.

Fast forward 130 years, and it enjoyed a lot of use – even being OK’ed for official use by the **US Navy** in 1889. Even though the Key poem and Stafford melody had been wed for years: however, regional variations crept in to the melody and rhythms. Even many performers take liberty to change the tune.



Some folks were asking for a single, standard version, and **Woodrow Wilson** decided to give it to them. Thus, he

empaneled Walter Damrosch, Will Earhart, Arnold J. Gantvoort, Oscar Sonneck and **John Philip Sousa** to figure it out.

Damrosch was the longtime conductor of the NY Symphony Orchestra who debuted *Rhapsody in Blue*; **Earhart** a music educator; **Gantvoort** a Music Professor; and **Sonneck** a musicologist. *They took to a voting system literally balloted measure for measure.* Three of the 5 votes carried the day for any given measure after they had all supplied their preferred versions. Damrosch himself directed the debut in 1917.

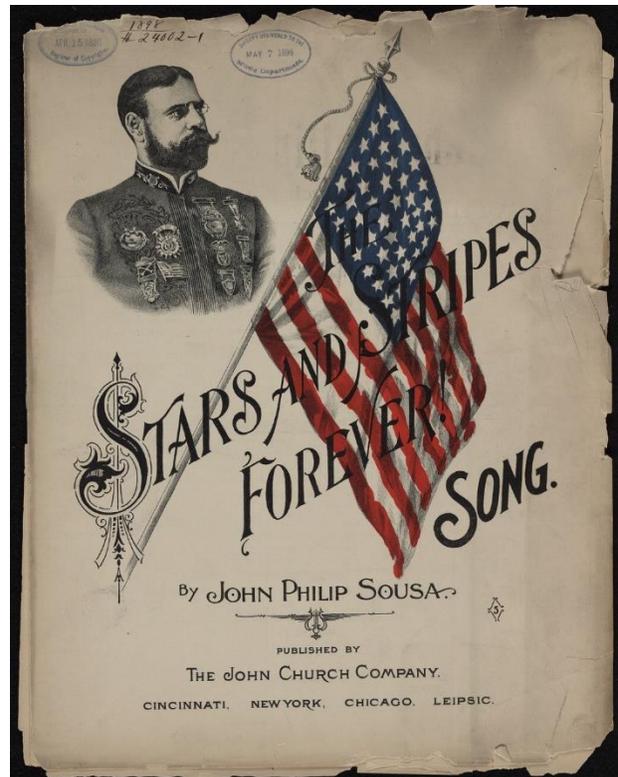
After that, **Sousa** and his popular band played the song in nearly every concert going forward, faithful to the agreed-upon version. The thousands of performances of this piece in its standardized form by Sousa is said to have done more than anything else to solidify the song we know today. Hey, we can sometimes even recognize it as “National Country Recording Artists” sing it before Packers games.

And what of **Stars and Stripes Forever**?

Sousa wrote it in his head while sailing the ocean blue, Christmas, 1896. He did not put quill to parchment until he got home and debuted it with his band in May of the following year. It was an instant success.

He even wrote a lyric for it, which is different in some significant ways from what **David Wright** offers us. David’s is... well... simply better. [Sorry, JPS].

It was instantly very popular. Of course, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and Parody even more sincere. It was not long after its introduction that it became so ubiquitous that it found its way onto everything from **Marx Brothers** movies to **Popeye** cartoons.



For our purposes, it commands that we think of the instruments we are imitating with our voices. The Sousaphones... the trumpets... the trombones... and the piccolos in the trio section. The closer we adhere to that, the greater our audience will be transported to an inspiring place. Each section is different

musically and thematically, and Bryan is pulling out all the stops to wring every bit of that ol' music stuff out of it.

It is some of the densest packing of spirited martial Oomph the world has seen and is going strong 125 years later. Very glad to be doing these two pieces so personally linked to **John Phillip Sousa**, a great American Musician.

FUN FACT: In theaters and circuses, **Stars and Stripes Forever** is known as **The Disaster March**, because the band slips into playing it when there is a dangerous issue at hand and all personnel must assist the patrons outside of the performance venue without causing a dangerous panic.

With Apologies – this will not contain an SLA Bibliography. Want to read more about him? Read Sousa's Autobiography from your local library.

Lamentably Bad Groundhog Humor

Q: What does it mean when a groundhog sees a maple leaf on February 2nd?

A: Six more weeks of bad hockey! (*Sorry about this one, Nick Beaudin.*)

Q: What happens when a groundhog tries to cross a well by burrowing under it?

A: It didn't go over well. (*Derek Balke would call this a Dad Joke.*)

Q: What happens if the ground **log** sees its shadow?

A: We'll have over six more weeks of splinters!

Q: Why was the groundhog depressed about his den?

A: He was having a bad lair day!



Q: What would you get if you crossed Groundhog Day with a Christmas drink?

A: Ground Nog Day!

Finally, this last one: At 11 o'clock, the doorbell rang. The wife answered, and there at her front door was a UPS driver, in his hand was a box containing 12 red roses.

Later, at 2 pm there was another knock at the door, this time it was a deluxe box of Belgian chocolates.

Eventually the husband came home, tired after a hard day's work. His wife greeted him by saying: 'First the flowers, then the chocolates, I've never had a more wonderful Groundhog Day in my life!'

