

Who is the 2023 Barbershopper of the Year?

2023 Barbershopper of the Year by Erik Roffelsen

Dear West Towners, family, and guests!

Last year I was very unsuspecting and surprised to be recognized as the Barbershopper Of The Year and then presented the award, becoming the caretaker year of this trophy for one year. An event that I very much appreciated.

As that happened a year ago, and as tradition goes, it is now my honor and pleasure to introduce this year's recipient of the award and the trophy.

This year, 2024, is also a special year because the history of rewarding this award and trophy started in 1974, or exactly 50 years ago. A double celebration today, I would say.

This recipient's engraved name also opens the fourth, and last side of the trophy.

Well, it took me only about 5 seconds to think of the person as the candidate for this year's "Barbershopper of The Year" honor. The nomination for this person was met with a 100% approval rate after consulting a small committee (of previous BOTY recipients).

Let me first point out some observations and experiences that assured me to believe to have found the right person, before my revelation, if that still would be needed:

- This person is one of the remarkable barbershop characters who knows so many songs by hearth; not only "his preferred part" but also a second, a third and sometimes even fourth part!
- It is not surprising that he once in a while functions as a tag master for the chorus, a quartet, but also for novices after rehearsal.
- He also takes the initiative to make digital "learning tapes" for the chorus.
- His eagerness and enthused attitude to teach these tags and songs to other barbershoppers, in and outside the West Towns Chorus, or even during conventions and competitions.

Continued on next page

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2023 Barbershopper of the Year by Erik Roffelsen *continued from previous page*

- He is also so enthused that one chorus is not enough to satisfy his love for barbershopping, so he sings with other choruses and in multiple quartets.
- He also takes the initiative to bring the West Towns to a higher plan by individual and quartet support.
- His initiative to encourage and coach members to form quartets, for fun, or to overcome hesitance, improve their music performance, or encourage quartets for a performance in multi sessions. (the undersigned enjoyed that last year)
- His initiative to reformat more complicated sheet music structures into one logical sequence for chorus use.
- His initiative to be the "show chair" for several events.
- But he is also an accomplished arranger, once receiving the Lou Perry Scholarship to attend Harmony University, and supporting chapter quartets with commissioned arrangements.
- And last, but not least, his musical genes are even so strong that they are found back in his musically gifted children.

May I herewith invite **Jim Jarosz** to come forward and accept the 2023 Barbershopper of the Year award.

Who is the 2023 Barbershopper of the Year?

2023 Rookie of the Year by Jim Brown

This award was initiated by Buzz Hager in 2002, who was himself an International Quartet champion, a chorus member, arranger, and major presence here and in the Barbershop Harmony Society. It is not an exaggeration to call him a legend in his own right.

Not every singer who joins us makes a significant, immediate impact on the chorus as a rookie. I stand here in front of you as someone who did not make a significant, immediate impact. To be named "Rookie of the Year" means something. The inscription says, "For Outstanding Achievement and Contribution by a New Member of the West Tows Chorus and Barbershop Harmony Society".

To be included with past Rookies of the Year puts the recipient in rare company. Look around you. Past winners have included Arnel Lo, Brian Luedtke, Bill Burt, Frank Glas, and Zach Gibson.

This year's recipient did make an impact right out of the box. He immediately became an anchor in the Bass section. He is often in the front row when we perform. He most recently accepted the position of Marketing Vice President on the board.

He made an immediate impact on his section and the chorus and continues to be looked to for advice. As West Towns moves forward, I hope he continues as a leader in the chorus.

His accomplishments stand on their own, but it is worth noting that he was brought to us by Rick Anthony's daughter Kara.

On behalf of Bob Nicodem, Bill Burt, and myself, I am proud to present the Rookie of the Year award to **Josh Love**.

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2024 Hall of Fame by Jim Brown

As president of the chorus, I get to do things, I get to learn things about the chorus, its history and its milestones. In writing this presentation, I have learned a lot. I need to offer my thanks and gratitude to other voices in the chorus who helped me prepare this.

This afternoon, we are recognizing two individuals who have made a significant contribution to the chorus. We are adding two names to the list of those that have come before. Some very recently, some long ago.

Some background is in order, and we all need to thank Don Davia for his memory of West Towns history. In about the year 2000, there was a significant upheaval, in that the chapter board and leadership left West Towns to form the Brotherhood of Harmony. We had no director and no board. Don tells me that Joe Tomecek and Bob Stone put together the Christmas Show that year. Following that our new director, Barb Laukaitis, looked at the remaining members and said, "You are now the leaders." Both of these individuals stepped forward and have played a huge role in making West Towns what it is today.

Our first inductee has a long history with West Towns. He joined the chorus in 1983 and was there for the second place Silver Medals in 1984, 1985 and 1986. He is the only remaining member from the first place championship in 1987. He became secretary in about 2002, and has held that position for more than 20 years. He transformed our print newsletter, first to an online weekly email, and most recently to the weekly PowerPoint that we all know and love, as "The Pitch". It is worth noting that, in 2011, he received the "Illinois District Bulletin Editor of the Year Award". He was instrumental in our move from the Downers Grove Moose Lodge to our current home at Horizon Church and continues to serve as our Rehearsal Facility Coordinator and Facilitator, setting up the sound board and coordinating Riser setup and takedown each week. It is important to note that he accomplished all of this and worked closely with each of our directors since 2000, ensuring that transitions were smooth and painless. Before we start any song, the starting pitch comes from Bob. Along with Bob, we have also greatly benefited from his wife Ellyn, who has been instrumental in our ticket sales and creating many costumes for the chorus. On behalf of the Board, the chorus, and all of you, I am proud to welcome **Bob Nicodem** into the West Towns Chorus Hall of Fame.

Who is the 2023 Barbershopper of the Year?

2024 Hall of Fame by Jim Brown continued

Our second inductee also has a long history with West Towns, joining us in 2000 and becoming treasurer in 2002, a post he has held for many of the years since then. His capable help and willingness to serve has played a major role in bringing us up to speed with both technology and finance.

When he became treasure, state and federal 501 (c3) files were done mostly on a "Leave it alone" basis. He made everything current and everything legal. He put the structures in place to enable us to receive grant money and endowments. It was not just West Towns. He also helped other choruses get up to speed with their own legal structures. In 2024, most of us think of this common sense, but at that time, no one was "doing it right".

Shortly after joining West Towns, we encountered legal challenges to parts of our Christmas show from those who had left to form another chorus. For many years, he and his wife Joyce worked tirelessly, writing scripts, managing the show, and working with the venues. He has been instrumental in producing what we now accept as a thirty-year history of Christmas shows.

Our Christmas show ticketing was moved to computers under his watch.

In addition to managing our finances, he has excelled at the role of fundraiser, writing grant requests which have resulted in West Towns receiving tens of thousands of dollars from both government and public foundations. This played a significant role in our surviving the onset of Covid when we could not perform.

He has worked with every director since 2002, giving us the consistency and stability that lets us do what we do. Many of us take what we have for granted, but other choruses do not have the people we have, who have given as much as they have to make West Towns work.

Again, on behalf of the Board, the chorus, and all of you, I am proud to welcome **Tony Tumea** into the West Towns Chorus Hall of Fame.

Who is the 2023 Barbershopper of the Year? Jim Jarosz!



Rookie of the Year:
Josh Love

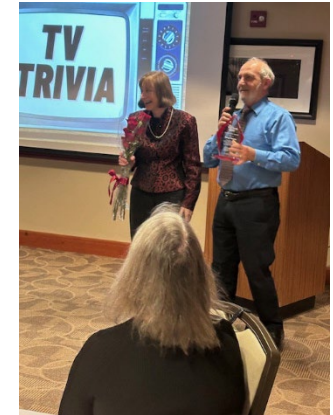
Emcee: Bill Burt
(and trivia team scorer)



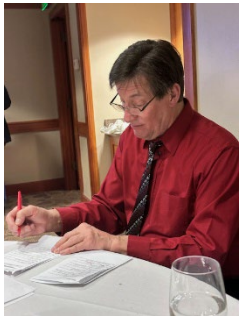
Barbershopper of the Year:
Jim Jarosz



Hall of Fame Inductee:
Bob Nicodem w/ Ellyn



Hall of Fame Inductee:
Tony Tumea w/ Joyce



Trivia Team Scores

- 1: Whiskey Business - 25
- 2: Acting Natural - 24
- 3: Almost Dutch - 23
- 4: No Baits - 21



Board installer: District Exec VP Ben Dirks (and Charlie)



**Who is the 2023 Barbershopper of the Year?
Jim Jarosz!**

Activity	Feb. 5, 2024 (Chairs – NO risers)
Physical warm-ups	
Vocal warm-ups	
Run throughs (2x)	My Girl (G#)
Rehearse Song	I Want to Hold Your Hand (C#)
Rehearse Song	Sweet Caroline (C)
Breaks	Business Comfort / Tag Zone
Section rehearsal	Africa (ms 5-23, 37-50 (Bb) [time on learning track:
Rehearse Song	Africa (Bb)
Run throughs (2x)	Crazy Little Thing Called Love (D)
Other	Raffle drawing and Keep the Whole World Singing

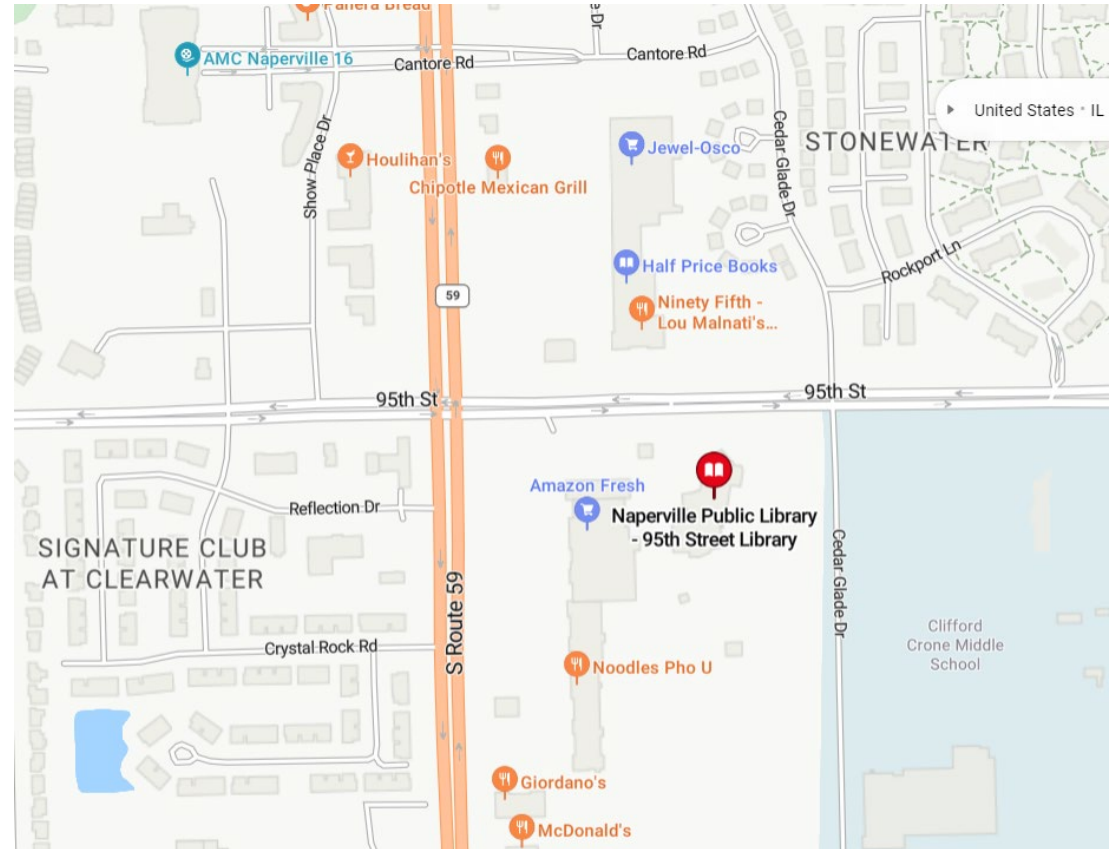


February Birthdays

- 8: Trenton Ferro
- 14: Neil Devore
- 16: Carrie Marcotte
- 24: Gerry Riva

Who is the 2023 Barbershopper of the Year? Jim Jarosz!

Naperville Library Performance
3015 Cedar Glade Dr, Naperville
Friday, Feb. 16, 2024
Call time: 6 PM. (Program starts 7 PM)
Wear: Black shoes, black pants,
Blue WTC polo shirt



Who is the 2023 Barbershopper of the Year?

West Towns Chorus

Chicagoland West Suburban chapter
P.O. Box 1005
Downers Grove, IL 60515
Phone: (630) 201-5544
www.WestTowns.org
Email: info@westtowns.org

Visit us on our website: www.WestTowns.org

2024 Board

President Jim Brown
Music VP Mark Servos
Development & Membership VP Tony Emerson
Program VP Frank Glas
Marketing VP Josh Love
Chorus Manager Bill Burt
Treasurer Tony Tumea
Secretary Bob Nicodem
Member-at-Large Dave Hollander
Past President Don Davia

Email

Board@WestTowns.org

Other Roles

Sunshine Care Person Don Davia
Librarian Daniel Melvin
Uniform Eric Roffelsen
Historian Joe Tomecek

**Rehearsals are every Monday at
Horizon & on Zoom unless otherwise noted**

2024

2/4 Awards / Installation Dinner
Details TBA
2/16/2024 7PM Naperville Library Valentines (Friday)
3015 Cedar Glade Dr, Naperville
2/16 - 17/2024 Harmony College Midwest
5/11/2024 3PM Spring Show - Benet Academy
6/14/2024 Coaching w/ Joe Cerruti?

The Music Team usually meets the second Thursday of each month 7:00 PM, at Horizon or using ZOOM. Board meetings are scheduled for the third Thursday of each month 7:00 PM at Bob Nicodem's house or Horizon

Music Team

Director: Carrie Marcotte
Asst-directors: Mark Betczynski & Joe Tomecek
Music VP: Mark Servos

Section Leaders

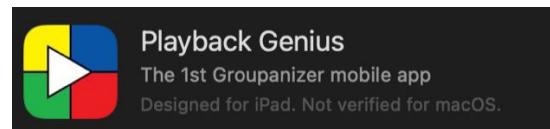
- Bass: Jim B.
- Baritone: Mark B
- Lead: Mark Servos
- Tenor: Trenton Ferro, Sid Peterson

Email

MusicTeam@WestTowns.org

Uniforms & Tuxedos: Talk to Eric Roffelsen about uniforms and tuxedos. Tuxedos are available at **Louis For Men**, 748 Ogden Ave, Downers Grove, IL 60515.

There is an app you can download which links to Groupanizer directly for learning track access. You can search in the App Store to download for free. (see below)



Join Zoom Meeting Topic: WTC rehearsal: Time: Mondays 07:00 PM Central Time

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81780296722?pwd=dTJHd2V5WWWhYOHAYdVhQQkVxUjJSdz09>

Meeting ID: 817 8029 6722 Passcode: 213478 One tap mobile: 1 312 626 6799,,81780296722#,,,,*213478#(Chicago)
Dial by your location 1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago) Meeting ID: 817 8029 6722 Passcode: 213478