

Membership of the TotemAires is growing!

The TotemAires, the Tacoma Barbershop Harmony Chapter, was founded September 27, 1946, by a group including E.N. Eisenhower, brother of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The chorus has birthed champion quartets and fed people into other chapters over the years. In its height of its membership, the TotemAires numbered about 90, and as we "gave away" members to other chapters, death, relocations, etc., it reached a low of eight "active" members. A year and a half ago when I joined the chapter, we felt blessed to have ten show up for a rehearsal.

While I have always sung, be it for fun, in church, or in my truck, I had never been exposed to barbershop music. Because of my profession, I sometimes made deliveries to Joint Base Lewis McChord. While waiting for my truck to be unloaded, a barbershop member heard me singing and told me about the TotemAires. I checked it out and became a member in October 2014. How I wish someone would have told me about barbershop 18 years ago when I moved to the Tacoma area! Now I tell anyone who will listen about this hobby that I love. When the new board was elected for 2015, when no one else

volunteered, I stepped up to be Membership VP. I told the guys that we are not the future of this chapter; it would be the new members we brought in. I started calling prospective candidates and following up my phone calls. Follow up and consistency are important. And....we are growing! This summer when one would expect attendance to be down, we had 20 to 27 men showing up for rehearsal.

Our chapter has had a booth at the Washington State Fair every year in the Education Pavilion. After a lackluster booth last year, we decided to go all out and give the booth some pizzazz. My quartet worked the booth two Saturdays and made contact with about 30 men who showed an interest in barbershop. We sang whenever we "felt a song comin' on" and even taught a few tags. When the fair ended, I called all of the guys we contacted and invited them to our "Sing, Sing, Sing" program. By the way, the majority of the men who were most interested were in their 20's, 30's, and 40's, with the two younger groups better represented.

Ed Gentz, Membership VP
Tacoma TotemAires



Pictures of our booth and three of the quartet singing with a prospective member.