REFLECTIONS OF AN EL SUPREMO

JOHN CIFELLI, RC '09
EL SUPREMO 2006–2009

I've witnessed my fair share of senior banquets during my time in the Glee Club. There are two specific senior banquet moments that I remember best, however. The first, where passage of the title of El Supremo occurred from my grand-maestro John Padden to my maestro Brendan Kelly, and the second where this same title was passed from Brendan Kelly to myself. If you took me back to the Parisian restaurant where the senior banquet was held six years ago, I could tell you exactly what booth I was in, as well as with whom I was sitting. The same goes for where I was at the Rutgers Club three years ago.

These memories most likely remain so vivid because even as a freshman young and green, I coveted the title greatly. Not out of a thirst for Glee Club power, or a desire for adulation, but to serve and lead the group I deem to be the finest example of what the college experience should be. I consider the El Supremo to be to the Glee Club what the Glee Club is to Rutgers – the heart and soul, the teeth and guts. Perhaps this is just my interpretation; I wasn’t even born when the first El Supremo was crowned. But that is the current manifestation of the position, and I believe it to be essential to the lifeblood of the Glee Club.

Of the many memories of John Padden that have stuck with me, perhaps the one that best represented to me what El Supremo was about goes as follows: we had finished another evening at Stuff Yer Face, and the Glee Clubbers who had lasted until the Alma Mater spilled out into a drizzly November night in New Brunswick. Padden and a few upperclassmen were headed to shoot pool, "El Supremo" continued on Page 2

CHORAL EXTRAVAGANZA

JEFF SMITH, RC '09
TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR 2008–2009

Those in attendance at Nicholas Music Center on the night of March 1st were treated to a wonderful and eclectic display of choral music by the ensembles of the Mason Gross Choral Department. The 3rd Annual Mason Gross Choral Extravaganza, a concert featuring all four choirs of the Mason Gross School of the Arts, provided the audience with an opportunity to enjoy a sampling of all that the choral department has to offer.

"I go to Glee Club concerts pretty regularly, but I might never have known how great all the other choirs are, if not for this concert," remarked Claire Almog (LC '09), one of the many in attendance. "It's a great opportunity for those who might be familiar with only one of the choirs to see what else is happening in the Rutgers choral world."

The now-annual concert began two years ago, when for the first time all four Mason Gross choirs joined forces on stage to perform O Fortuna from Carl Orff's Carmina Burana, as well as Moses Hogan's arrangement of Elijah Rock. The concert was a well-attended success, and has since become notorious for filling Nicholas Music Center to capacity.

"They try to let the choirs sit in the hall and watch each other, but by the time the Glee Club is done performing, they've given away our seats to make room for more people," noted Eric Drylewicz (MGSA '09), a senior Glee Club member.

This year's concert featured, as always, performances by all four choirs, and was highlighted by combined performances of the Gloria from Paul Basler's Missa Kenya, under the direction of Voorhees Choir direc-"Extravaganza" continued on Page 3

“The Official Newsletter of the Rutgers University Glee Club
Volume 26, Issue 3, Spring 2009
The Rutgers University Glee Club is a performance ensemble of the Mason Gross School of the Arts
"Pride in Musical Excellence Since 1872"
El Supremo
Continued from Page 1

and invited me along. I had a paper due, or math homework, or something else that today isn’t important. I told Padden as such, and as I headed towards the Grease Trucks to catch a bus home, Padden boomed, “Whatever, Cifelli, only the strong survive.” It was that all-out, take no prisoners attitude that I always felt was Padden’s best attribute as El Supremo. A champion at Mao, Soup Bowl, and Mike’s Hunt, and a great singer, Padden was the archetypical Glee Clubber, and he fit the part so effortlessly that his leadership was infectious.

Whether or not his club-first, sing-hard-play-hard attitude was his true personality or simply his persona as El Supremo, I do not know. But through Brendan Kelly and then myself, that became role of the El Supremo – to insist that everyone enjoy club to the fullest extent, that everyone perform at their highest level, and that Glee Club be the most fun a man can have during his time at university. I have done my best to live up to these expectations that I would hold any El Supremo to if the role were not currently bestowed upon me.

On my watch, Glee Club guys have traveled to UCONN, Navy, Pittsburgh, and West Point for football games. A bowl game trip has become an annual tradition. Trips to hear visiting choirs and support other Rutgers ensembles beyond the Banks are a common occurrence. Extra rehearsals for rookies, dinner at the Rutgers Club, an occasional late-night kidnapping and trip to Philly for cheese steaks – you just never know what to expect these days if you are in the Glee Club. All along, I have tried to instill in every member what makes me go in this group.

If the passion were to die within Glee Club, a little shine would fade from Rutgers’ mantle. I will never forget how incredible we sounded, nor how much fun I had in my freshman year, especially on tour in Europe. I make it my personal responsibility to make Glee Club that great for everyone. There are so many outlets for extra-curricular activities at Rutgers, but if Glee Club is the best place to be, why would anyone want to do something else? Fostering brotherhood, making incredible music, and lighting a fire inside these men is what I try to do, as Padden and Kelly did for me. It is a task I have taken very seriously and with great honor. I will be sad to give the title away, but my last action as El Supremo will be to choose who will follow me. Nothing would make me happier than to have an even greater El Supremo as my successor.

GLEE CLUB ATTENDS A LECTURE, AND ENJOYS IT!
RICH WELLS, RC ’10
BUSINESS MANAGER 2008–2009

Occasionally, faculty and staff at Rutgers present students with the opportunity to attend a one-time lecture on certain subjects of interest that may not be offered in the general list of courses. When this happens, a small group of students is usually considered a successful turnout. On this occasion, however, the entire Glee Club, together with handfulls of other students, staff, and the general public, gathered for what usually turns these same people running in the other direction. What was different about this time, you ask? This past November, Mason Gross’ Dean George Stauffer presented a lively lecture on “Great College Football Songs” as part of the Game Day Lecture Series that ran before each Rutgers home game.

The lecture was not based solely on Rutgers, though. In addition to another chance for the Glee Club to perform from its extensive repertoire of Rut-
This lecture presented the opportunity to learn the fight songs of other colleges. After the Glee Club got over the initial shock of displaying spirit for a team other than their beloved Scarlet Knights, members were very receptive to the idea and showed a great deal of enthusiasm for fight songs from Michigan, Notre Dame, and Georgia Tech. Of course, a few tailored versions of these songs emerged from the mix, but these were performed in a setting much less formal than the Dean’s lecture ...

Live performances of these songs were definitely a highlight of the lecture, which was filled with interesting commentary on the history, structure, and evolution of collegiate fight songs. Dean Stauffer began his lecture by commenting on the sport of football itself, and how its similarities to the battles of Roman gladiators stir up some of our most passionate emotions. He continued by noting the

other areas in which music and emotion have had a common partnership throughout history.

Finally, the Glee Club was able to demonstrate how the repetitive, simple melodies and large block chords of college fight songs are able to rally crowds of people by ending the lecture with a four-hand piano version of *The Bells Must Ring!* Although the crowd enjoyed a variety of songs, it was obvious that nothing could get them up and moving like a good old Rutgers cheer. After Dean Stauffer’s excellent lecture and some extra encouragement from the Glee Club, the audience was more than ready to head over to the stadium and watch the Scarlet Knights defeat Army. It could be coincidence, but several members of the Glee Club noticed the crowd cheering extra loudly for this one.
A LOOK BACK:
AN INTERVIEW WITH
DR. DICK MATTHES

DAN COMITO, SAS ’11
VP ALUM 2008–2009

When Dick Matthes arrived at Rutgers in 1962 for the start of his freshman year, joining the Glee Club was not the first thing on his mind. Despite his previous experience singing in both church and school choirs, he had not given too much thought to the prospect of singing at Rutgers. In fact, all that he knew about the Glee Club at that time was from a flier that his father had pointed out to him the year before. It showed the Glee Club getting off of a plane during their 1960 tour. After hearing another student on his floor play a Glee Club record featuring the alma maters of other colleges, however, Dick decided to check out the club. After being accepted into the Glee Club, Dick was presented with a difficult choice: either quit in order to stay on the fencing team, in which he was a rising competitor, or leave fencing in favor of the Glee Club. His decision to stick with Glee Club, though difficult, was one that Dick says he would still make and will never regret. For the next four years the Rutgers University Glee Club would be an integral part of his life, remaining what Dick considers “the best thing that happened to me in my years at Rutgers.”

From 1962 to 1966, the Rutgers University Glee Club, under the direction of Soup Walter, went on to give many great concerts around the country and the world. In those years, when Rutgers was still an all-male university, the Spring concerts were held in the College Avenue Gymnasium, which was packed every year. The Spring concert season had a full schedule with concerts almost every weekend at different venues. During his time at Rutgers, Dick remembers the exchange concerts with other universities as being the most fun. “There was a fun and competitive spirit,” Dick remembers, “every choir thought that theirs was the best... but of course the RUGC was clearly superior.” Perhaps one of the most memorable concerts during his years at Rutgers, however, took place when Leopold Stokowski, then the conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra, conducted the University Choir in a joint concert at Carnegie Hall. At the time the nucleus of the men’s sections of UC consisted of men from the Glee Club, and thus this concert had a strong Glee Club flavor. Dick recalls this as being the only time that he remembers Soup being nervous before a concert, with his normally calm composure shed in the presence of the famous conductor. Leopold Stokowski conducted the concert beautifully and Dick even remembers how impressed Stokowski was specifically with the bass section, which he likened to a troupe of Russian basses.

Dick looks back fondly on his years spent in the Glee Club, and all of the things he did during his membership. One such memory also involves the concert in Carnegie Hall, after which a large group from the Glee Club went into the nearby Carnegie Tavern to continue singing Rutgers songs. After a few of their favorites, the manager of the tavern came over and asked them to leave because...

Summer Alumni Picnic!

Do you like bar-b-que’s? Do you like beer?
Do you like singing...while at a bar-b-que drinking beer?

If that sounds like fun, come to the Glee Club Alumni Summer Bar-B-Que!

Catch up with friends, make some new ones, reminisce, and meet some of our upstanding current members as well. As expected... singing will ensue!

Date: Sunday, August 23rd
Location: Johnson Park, Piscataway, New Jersey
Questions: dcomito@eden.rutgers.edu

More information will be available shortly, so keep an eye out on the Glee Club website (gleeclub.rutgers.edu) for updates. Questions can be directed to our VP Alum, Dan Comito, at the address listed above. We hope to see you there!
they were causing too much trouble. The Glee Club responded comically by standing outside of the tavern and singing *Down Among the Dead Men*. Dick remembers similar things happening to them on their European tour in 1966, especially having 30 or so singers completely drowned out by the noise of other customers in the bars of Munich. His favorite Rutgers song was the *Rutgers History Lesson*, which he remembers being especially fun because of how animated Soup could be. Another enjoyable song was an antiphonal piece, *O Magnum Mysterium*, which the Glee Club used to open up many of their concerts with during his four years at Rutgers. Dick used to be in the group that was on stage, and recalls loving to watch the faces of the crowd turn around in surprise when they heard another group singing the other half of the piece appear in the back of crowd. This scene has replayed itself in the Glee Club’s more recent concerts, such as this year’s *Christmas in Carol and Song* Series.

As with many singers who have spent their four years on the Banks, Dick vividly remembers his European tour, which took place in the summer of 1966. This tour took him and the rest of the Glee Club through France, Germany, Luxemburg, and the Netherlands, with the Glee Club performing in all of these countries. The repertoire and trip itinerary were so extensive that Dick remembers having to prepare for the tour more than a year in advance. During these years, a lot of the travel expenses were made up by chartering an entire plane for the Glee Club alone and then selling all of the extra tickets back into the Rutgers community, which also allowed the Glee Club to have a substantial following in Europe. In order to have the trip work, however, it was necessary to leave before the University Graduation ceremonies. The solution to this problem, of course, was to have the diplomas flown over to Europe to be presented to the students there. What better place for the diplomas to be presented than Rutgers’ ‘parent’ University in the Netherlands, The University of Utrecht; the university’s Rector Magnificus presented these diplomas.

Dr. Matthes remembers his years in Glee Club fondly, and regrets not pursuing music after college. His advice to current members and recent alumni is to stay involved, both with the University and with singing in general. Dick, although not currently involved with singing himself, got one of his sons interested and encouraged him to pursue an a cappella choir at Yale. Dick loved the musical excellence that was created by the Glee Club despite the fact that very few members were actually music majors. “It was a great experience with a lot of guys who were great at singing and loved what they did,” says Dick. “What better situation can there be?”

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**MY ROOKIE YEAR**

**PETER FABIAN, SAS ’12**

**UNIFORM MANAGER 2008–2009**

On the fateful day of Freshman Convocation, I sat alone on the sizzling metal bench in Rutgers Stadium pondering the flurry of activities taking place before my eyes. The announcer was valiantly trying to create an exciting and informative environment by starting crowd games involving Rutgers trivia, and a fair amount of free incentives. However, I was not so easily roped in. I was looking for a true representation of what this storied institution really meant, and a few inflatable balls, t-shirts, and trivia questions were simply not fulfilling my expectations. Finally, the main event began to unfold and student organizations began to exhibit their unique skills for those masses of freshmen packed into the stands. The Rutgers Capoeira Club performed its elegant fusion of martial arts and dance and the infamous a cappella group *Orphan Sporks* performed versions of popular R&B tunes using little more than gaudy costumes and their own vocal chords. Next came another a cappella group, this time all-male, called *Casual Harmony*. Their camaraderie and unique style of music began to pique my interest and I made a mental note to look up the times for their auditions. However, my expectations were about to be blown away by the next group that was set to perform.

The next event was announced as the Rutgers University Glee Club and I was somewhat skeptical at first, especially after the preceding *Casual Harmony* act had appealed to me on so many levels.

“Rookie Year” continued on Page 7
Sure, a 15-hour car ride to Alabama seems like a long trip, but when this time separates you from the fourth consecutive Rutgers bowl game, 15 hours can seem like an eternity. Thus began the RUGC trip to the PapaJohns.com Bowl game. At least five different carpools set out to watch the Scarlet Knights play the North Carolina State Wolf Pack, each loaded with a weekend’s worth of tailgating gear. Hours of driving ensued, and we made our way from New Jersey through the many southern states to Alabama, and finally arrived at our motel. Thankfully, ‘jet lag’ was minimal, and we could all easily adjust to Alabama’s one-hour time difference.

Though happy to be there after a full day of driving, we could not help but notice that we were outnumbered; our motel was a haven for NC State fans. Southern hospitality got the last say, though, and interactions between Rutgers fans and the Wolf Pack were friendly, lively, and harmlessly competitive. That night we slept cramped, but soundly, in our rooms, dreaming about the exciting football action to take place the following afternoon.

After a quick breakfast at the Waffle House the next morning, our crew began preparing for the game, donning scarlet paint and RUGC Soup Bowl jerseys. Our ever-ready El Supremo, John Cifelli, then gathered us all for an exhilarating set of Rutgers songs. All that remained now was to head off to the game.

The game itself was a metaphor for the Rutgers season, with a frustrating start, a beautiful comeback in the middle, and then a narrow but steady final victory. Hoarse from the cheering, we still managed a congratulatory set of reverent Rutgers songs. After walking around the stadium for a while, taxis were rented, reservations at a local barbecue were made, and some of us tended to our surprising December sunburns. The barbecue restaurant, Jim ’N Nick’s, was packed with Rutgers fans, and yet another set was sung for the alumni who crowded the room. Despite grand ambitions to sample the Alabama nightlife, sheer exhaustion resulted in a night spent in at our motel.

Bright and early the next morning, our bags were packed, cars were loaded, waffles were consumed, and the RUGC caravan headed north toward the Mason-Dixon Line. The Scarlet Knights, now on a four-year bowl victory streak, proved yet again that they were national contenders. The RUGC has been with them the whole way, and has no plans to discontinue what has recently become an exciting new tradition.

Upcoming Events

Rutgers Day:
Sunday, April 25, 2009, All Day
Across All Campuses
(RUGC appearances to be listed on website)

137th Annual Spring Concert:
Saturday, May 2, 2009, 8:00 PM
Nicholas Music Center

Alumni BBQ:
Sunday, August 23, 2009,
Time TBA
Johnson Park, Piscataway
My Rookie Year

Continued from Page 5

Glee Club’s somber appearance as they marched into position wearing their grey blazers, and their concentration as they focused their attention on their equally-professional looking conductor, made this large group of men seem somewhat daunting and unapproachable. I sat back to prepare myself for their performance. My assumptions, however, were rapidly falsified, as my ears feasted on their wonder-fully rich and full melodies, telling of the glories of the University to which I had just committed four years of my life. I was captivated by their perfor-mance, and when they broke out of the The Bells
Must Ring to rouse the crowd with an “RU-RAH-RAH” chant, I was floored. Their passionate breaking of ranks to reach out and share their school spirit with my peers and me was such a great testament to the character of the University as a whole. It was then, as I saw the complete Glee Club, Dr. Gardner included, singing their beloved alma mater for the crowd, that I decided I had to join this group and see what this ensemble was like from the inside.

It has been just over one semester since that August day, and I simply cannot find fault with my de-cision to join this exemplary group of men. My first semester included such illustrious events as singing Spasmenye at the memorial service of Walter Seward, the oldest Rutgers alumnus to date, winning the coveted Soup Walter Trophy in the annual Soup Bowl game, the first Glee Club victory in five years, driving all the way to Birmingham, Alabama with many members of the Glee Club to see Rutgers’ victory in the Papajohns.com Bowl, and occupying the Cape May Grand Hotel for an extremely produc-tive rehearsal retreat. Despite the glorious nature of these individual events, the bonds of brotherhood, school pride, and devotion to musical excellence have all impacted me more deeply than any trip or performance ever could. I truly feel like a valuable member of this great ensemble as well as a mem-ber of the greater Rutgers community. So, as future term papers and exams loom on the horizon, I can only look forward with joyful expectation to the possibility of more events and performances with this historic men’s chorus in my remaining years here at Rutgers. I can only imagine what a bland experience college would have been but for that fateful performance that has forever made me a “Loyal Son” of Rutgers University.

The 2009 Spring Concert is just around the corner...

Tickets On Sale Now!

Come join the Rutgers University Glee Club as we celebrate our 137th year of musical excellence! In addition to a celebration in song, a Glee Club alumni and member reception will complement the evening immediately following the concert in Nicholas Music Hall.

However, this can’t take place without your support! To help make this year’s concert reception a success, donations of any amount will be greatly appreciated. For information on how to donate, please visit our website at: gleeclub.rutgers.edu. We hope to see you there!

For concert information, please visit: www.masongross.rutgers.edu
The Rutgers University Glee Club Presents:

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- Voice of the Bard – Jennifer Higdon

Plus much more!! To order your copy today, detach the CD order form and mail to the address below, or order online at gleeclub.rutgers.edu

Rutgers University Glee Club CD Order Form

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