



Singing their hearts out

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The Racing City Chorus serenades lovers every February.

Singing Valentines, anyone? Not the kind from Western Union, but a quartet of tuxedo-clad singers from The Racing City Chorus who come armed with a long-stemmed red rose from The Posie Peddler, a chocolate sampler from Saratoga Sweets, a lovely personalized card, and two of the most romantic songs for your loved one.

This February, for the 13th year, the chorus' 10 quartets will serenade more than 100 sweethearts in a six-county area. "Every situation is different," says Norm Mendenhall, a 26-year chorus veteran who lives in Saratoga Springs. "The client plans on the shock value. So we need to be flexible."

Singing Valentines are not a new idea, but Racing City was the first in the area to do it on such a large scale, he adds. Before there were cell phones, quartets often had to stop at a pay phone to find out their next destination for a Singing Valentine, which meant that in one day, they might have to travel from Cohoes to Glens Falls and then back to Saratoga Springs. "We did a lot of driving," Mendenhall says with a grin.

In 1997, Jerry Crouth took over, running the show from his house. Singers communicated on walkie-talkies borrowed from a chorus member who had a snow removal business and used them to deploy trucks. Eventually, technology brought efficiency. Today, quartet members have cell phones, use

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